



STRENGTH: Resilience



*"The greatest glory of living lies not in never falling but in rising every time you fall."— **Nelson Mandela***

Definition: "Resilience" is the ability to deal positively with the adversities of life.

Verse: *"We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed."*

- 2 Corinthians 4:8-9

1. Introduction: What is Resilience?

Resilience is often misunderstood as simply having the ability to “bounce back” from difficulty. But it’s much more than that. **Resilience is the capacity to adapt positively in the face of adversity, trauma or tragedy.** It’s not about avoiding hardship or pretending everything is okay when it’s not. Resilience is about overcoming life’s challenges and emerging stronger, wiser and more capable.

Scientifically, resilience is understood as a dynamic process rather than a fixed trait. It involves behaviors, thoughts and actions that can be learned and developed over time. Resilience is not about eliminating stress or erasing life’s difficulties - it’s about developing the tools to deal with challenges effectively. Cultivating resilience can be seen a way of living out our trust in God’s faithfulness and sovereignty, even in the most difficult of times.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. - Proverbs 3:5

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him. - Romans 8:28

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." - Jeremiah 29:11

2. Cultivating Resilience - characteristics of a resilient mindset

Inner Peace & Calmness

- **Anchor Verse:** *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)
- **Description/Example:** Resilient individuals maintain internal composure over anxiety rather than giving in to panic. Jesus modeled this calm spirit by sleeping peacefully during a raging sea storm, and He actively invites all who are heavy-laden to find true soul rest in Him.
- **Something to Try:** Protect your mind from information overload by cultivating a daily "quiet time" ritual. When stress spikes, intentionally pause your breathing, remind yourself of God’s sovereignty, and mentally hand over specific, stressful outcomes to Christ before taking action.

Emotional Control & Forgiveness

- **Anchor Verse:** *Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.* (Colossians 3:13)
- **Description/Example:** This involves intentionally managing emotional impulses and completely releasing resentment. Joseph demonstrated a high level of emotional maturity when he chose to forgive his brothers, echoing Christ's core teachings on extending radical grace to others.
- **Something to Try:** Create a healthy pause between feeling an impulse and reacting. When wronged, actively pray for the person who hurt you to interrupt the bitterness cycle. Use journaling or talking with a trusted friend to unpack heavy emotions before addressing any conflicts directly. You could also consider building a habit every evening to intentionally name any offenses from the day and verbally pray: *"I release [Name] from this debt."*

Trust & Confidence in God

- **Anchor Verse:** *Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.* (Hebrews 13:5)

- **Description/Example:** True resilience is choosing to trust God's plan even when facing overwhelming fear or uncertainty, instead of trying to control the outcome yourself. A good example is Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane; though He felt immense emotional agony over the upcoming crucifixion, He traded His worry for divine strength by praying, *"Not my will, but Yours be done."*
- **Something to Try:** Takes notes, journal, or otherwise document past moments when God faithfully met your needs. When future threats trigger anxiety, read through this record to anchor your self in God's unchanging love rather than fluctuating circumstances.

Gratitude, Hope & Adaptability

- **Anchor Verse:** *I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength.* (Philippians 4:12-13)
- **Description/Example:** Resilient people view setbacks as temporary hurdles rather than permanent catastrophes. They choose joy and thankfulness as active spiritual disciplines, and learn the secret of contentedly adapting to any life transition or circumstance. Joseph modeled this when thrown into an Egyptian dungeon - rather than viewing prison as a permanent catastrophe, he adapted to his new reality with a positive attitude, worked hard, and trusted that it was a temporary hurdle in God's larger plan.
- **Something to Try:** Train your eyes to spot blessings hidden inside difficult transitions. End every day by naming three specific things you are grateful for, forcing your mind to look for the good and expect positive, temporary solutions to current problems.

Compassion & Loving Connection

- **Anchor Verse:** *'Love your neighbor as yourself.'* *There is no commandment greater than these.* (Mark 12:31)
- **Description/Example:** Instead of turning inward during a difficult time, resilient believers often maintain an outward focus. They choose to lean heavily into community, practice deep empathy, and actively look for ways to love and serve their neighbors. The early church demonstrated this connection when believers faced intense economic famine and political persecution and refused to isolate, choosing instead to pool their resources, send financial relief to other hurting communities, and gather together in homes to pray.
- **Something to Try:** Resist the natural temptation to isolate yourself when life gets painful. Actively schedule time with trusted friends or small group members, and deliberately redirect your focus away from your own problems by helping somebody else.

Perseverance in Adversity

- **Anchor Verse:** *Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance.* (James 1:2-3)
- **Description/Example:** Recovering from trauma or times of great difficulty requires viewing hardships through a lens of faith. Resilient Christians intentionally embrace trials as divine tools meant to produce spiritual maturity, patient endurance, and tested character. Paul lived this truth out daily, enduring repeated beatings, shipwrecks, and betrayals, yet he continuously

reframed his suffering as "light and momentary troubles" that were actively building an eternal glory far outweighing them all.

- **Something to Try:** View setbacks as temporary, solvable challenges rather than permanent failures. Reframe painful events not as senseless punishments, but as opportunities for deeper spiritual refinement. Break large crises down into small, daily faith steps, trusting that God is actively cultivating your endurance and building a testimony through the struggle. When facing a setback, try praying: *"This is hard, but even so, I know God is using it to build my endurance."*

3. **Choose Joy!** (taken from AARP Magazine June/July 2026)

CHOOSE JOY. HERE'S WHY

YOU ARE, HOPEFULLY, already doing all the "right" things to age better, like strength training, walking more, eating well and prioritizing sleep. But there's something else you should focus on to stay healthy and live longer, and it all starts in your head: Find moments of joy, even during hardship. But how?

Don't confuse joy with happiness. According to Kerry Burnight, a gerontologist and author of *Joyspan: The Art and Science of Thriving in Life's Second Half*, happiness can ebb and flow and often depends on external circumstances, but joy means looking inward to find a sense of well-being and contentment, even when confronting illness, loss and other realities of life. Burnight says choosing and practicing joy helps cultivate

internal strength and resilience—the ability to grow, connect, adapt and give, no matter what's going on.

Why does this matter to your body?

Burnight points to research that links psychological well-being to lower inflammation, better brain health and a stronger immune system, which can lower your risk for disease and pain. A landmark Yale study found that older adults who had a more positive view of aging lived 7.5 years longer than those who didn't. Burnight says we should not listen to that toxic internal message that getting older means becoming less relevant or capable, which is associated with higher risk of frailty, something we should all avoid.

Where do you start? With this simple idea: "Joy is a choice." Like getting physically fit, it takes intention, practice and commitment. Burnight's plan to raise your "joyspan":

- **Choose joy every day.** Before you get out of bed in the morning, decide to focus your thoughts on what is right in your life, not just what is wrong.
- **Grow.** Stay curious. Learn something. Stretch yourself and keep reaching. Growth keeps you engaged with life.
- **Connect.** "Connection can't be on autopilot," says Burnight. Reach out. Make the call. Be the initiator.
- **Adapt.** Life changes. Reassess and tweak. Be willing to use the tools that help you keep going.
- **Give.** "You always have something to give of yourself," says Burnight. Purpose starts here.

Cultivating joy may be one of the healthiest decisions you make. —Barbara Hannah Grufferman,



Weekly Challenges

- **Who's Carrying the Weight:** Think of a situation right now where you feel completely overwhelmed or at a loss for answers. If you stopped trying to fix it with your own human grit, what is one way you could specifically ask for God's power to carry the weight instead?
- **Lifting the Load:** True resilience is rarely built alone. Identify one trusted friend, family member, or church community member this week, share a specific burden you are currently carrying, and allow them to offer you prayer, advice, or practical help.
- **Growing One Trial At a Time:** Look at a current trial or daily annoyance in your life and ask: If God is using this difficult situation to build your spiritual endurance, what specific character trait is He trying to grow in you right now? (e.g., patience, humility, trust).
- **A Life of Gratitude:** When life feels chaotic, gratitude anchors your mind. Every evening this week before bed, name three distinct things that went well or brought you peace during the day, intentionally shifting your focus away from the hardships.