Della Major

September 13, 2024

Outline

**Draft Title: Empowered Through Adversity: A Christian Woman’s Guide to Resilient Living**

**Dedication**

**Acknowledgement**

**Introduction**

**Empowered Through Adversity**

**Chapter 1: Understanding Adversity: A Biblical Perspective**

1. Meaning of Adversity
2. The joy of trials and tribulations (James 1:1-2)
3. Refined Through Adversity: My story
4. Proper Response to Adversity
5. Reflect/Recite/Call to Action

**Chapter 2: Not a victim but a Victor**

1. Redefining your identity through Adversity
2. Self-worth is not defined by circumstances
3. Divine purpose
4. Living as a Conqueror in Christ
5. Reflect/Recite/Call to Action

**Chapter 3: So as a Man Think**

1. Killing your inner critic
2. Healing thoughts
3. Kingdom mindset
4. Reflect/Recite/Call to Action

**Journey to Resilient Living**

**Chapter 4: Defining Resilience: A biblical perspective**

1. Resilience: What does mean?
2. The Big Bounce Back
3. Courage to Walk it Out
4. Reflect/Recite/Call to Action

**Chapter 5: Thriving in the midst of Adversity**

1. Pushing Past Pain into Power
2. Promises over Adversity
3. I have, I am, I can
4. Reflect/Recite/Call to Action

**Chapter 6: Blueprint to becoming Resilient**

1. Self-awareness
2. Self-care
3. Mindfulness
4. Positive Relationship
5. Reflect/Recite/Call to Action

**Chapter 7: Resilient Living**

1. Be Strong and Courageous
2. Promise over Adversity
3. Trusting God in the Wilderness
4. I have, I am, I can
5. Reflect/Recite/Call to Action

**Changing the Game**

**Chapter 8: Turning trials into triumph**

1. All things working for my good
2. No weapons formed shall prosper
3. Reflect/Recite/Call to Action

**Chapter 9: Thriving in Your Finances: From Scarcity to Abundance**

1. Financial Stewardship
2. Kingdom Giving
3. Wealth Mindset
4. Reflect/Recite/Call to Action

**Chapter 10: Rebuilding Relationship**

1. Learning to Trust again
2. Reconciling Faith and Friendship
3. Reflect/Recite/Call to Action

**Chapter 11: Empowered for Purpose**

1. Living Testimony
2. Discovery your Uniqueness
3. Reflect/Recite/Call to Action
	1. Purpose: To understand that not all life-altering pain or setback that you go through is bad. Going through a major adversity or challenge in your life is often the conduit that leads you through the process of discovering your purpose, activating or regaining your power, gaining wisdom and maturity. It helps you to build your character of perseverance which lead to the fulfillment of God’s plan for your life that leads to a hope and a future. (Jeremiah 29:11)
	2. What would my reader gain or what would be their call to action:
		1. They will identify how going through their specific challenge help them to build up their faith in God and how it helps them to strengthen their comeback muscle as an overcomer.
		2. The tools and strategies that will be shared throughout each chapter of the book will serve as a guideline that would equip my reader with a simple practical way on how to thrive while still going through adversity. Each chapter will highlight my specific journey on how prayer, God’s Word and faith and total surrender to Holy Spirit guidance helps me to live day to day with three Chronic illnesses and yet still thrive.

**Introduction**

The scars on my body tell the story of the pain that I live with every day of my life. Each one tells the story of the battles that I’ve fought physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Nobody knows what it is like to live with pain in my body that hurts every day. People say that I am strong and resilient. They say that I am an overcomer and an anointed woman of God, but what they don’t see is the inner struggle that I deal with daily. The pain of feeling like a failure on not saving my marriage, the pain of feeling alone and lonely, the pain of feeling unsuccessful in life while being that sister friend that everyone was thinking I was supposed to be and the burden of carrying these scars when no one truly understands.

Life has a way of dealing you challenges and hurts that you believe you cannot overcome or recover from. We find ourselves in places where the pain or setback that we face seem too great and the disappointment too deep. It feels like we find ourselves in a cycle of sorrow and the hope of overcoming challenges is insurmountable and unattainable. But what if I told you that the pain and setbacks that you once believed you could not overcome is not the end of your story, but the beginning of your journey to pushing pass your pain into your power.

German Philosopher, Friedrich Nietzsche famous quote states “Out of life’s school of war—what doesn’t kill me, make me stronger.” This quote portrays a picture of resilience and affirmation of overcoming adversity. I have come to realize that the numerous adversities that I was experiencing were not meant to break me but to empower me. Over the years, I have learned to push past my pain and setbacks into a place of power not because I was strong but by the strength that I receive from my faith in God. You see, the pain and setbacks that I experienced, as crippling as they can be, was the very thing that led me to a deeper understanding of my purpose and identity.

It is important to understand that not all life-altering pain or setbacks that you go through is bad. Going through a major adversity or challenge in your life is often the catalyst for growth, for resilience, for transformation that leads you through the process of discovering your purpose, activating or regaining your power, gaining wisdom and maturity. It helps you to build your character of perseverance which leads to the fulfillment of God’s plan for your life. (Jeremiah 29:11, NLT)

The word “resilient” means changing your thinking and the way you live. Looking beyond your situation and making the decision to reclaim your life and become the person that you have always wanted to become. As we journey together through this book, I’ll share tools and strategies that will help you to live a life of resilience which empowers you through adversity. Whether it’s pain from loss, from broken relationships, financial struggle, or even physical illness, we’ll uncover how to overcome these challenges and strengthen your comeback muscle as an overcomer and thrive.

The tools and strategies that will be shared throughout each chapter of the book will serve as a roadmap that would guide you with a simple practical way on how to thrive while going through adversity. Each chapter will highlight my specific journey on how prayer, faith, biblical principles, and total surrender to Holy Spirit guidance helps me to live daily in spite of whatever pain and challenges that I am experiencing. So, what is the first step? Understand adversity from a biblical perspective, and how God uses it to build resilience in us. Let’s begin!

**Chapter 1**

**Understanding Adversity: A Biblical Perspective**

***Though the Lord gave you adversity for food and suffering for
drink, he will still be with you to teach you. You will see your
teacher with your own eyes. -- Isaiah 30:20***

Adversity is defined as a state or instance of serious or continued difficulty or misfortune. Adversity refers to any event or set of circumstances that causes significant difficulty, distress, or suffering. It can come unexpectantly and take many different forms affecting every area of our lives. One of the greatest misconceptions of living a life of faith is that we are immune to hardships and adversities. Throughout His ministry, Jesus endured many trials and tribulations because of completing His assignment on earth. Since Jesus is our map and model by which we live our lives by, the expectation of facing unspeakable and unexplainable hardship and difficulties that rock the very core or our existence is inevitable. Isaiah 43:2 says ***“When you go through deep waters, I will be with you. When you go through rivers of difficulty, you will not drown. When you walk through the fire of oppression, you will not be burned up; the flames will not consume you.” (NLT)*** In the text, the prophet Isaiah clearly outlined that as children of God, we will have adversity in our lives, but we will not deal with it alone. The promise of God will there with us every step of the way brings a level of comfort and peace that we can endure whatever the challenge might be.

As born-again believers there is a level of adversity that we expect to go through that helps us grow in our knowledge of God and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. In that growth, we learn and develop the necessary tools needed to succeed in life and we learn how to develop our comeback muscles when adversity happens in our life. God expects us to know Him and how He works in our lives. Having that understanding helps us to know that it is through His leadership and guidance that help us when distractions, challenges and setbacks in our lives occurs.

Maturity only comes from weathering storms that defines our true core values and character. James 1:2-4 states ***2Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. 3For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. 4So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.*** (NLT) In this text, believers are challenged to rejoice when faced with trials and tribulations for the testing of their faith produces perseverance which leads to maturity in their lives. The knowledge of overcoming various trials in life leads to a completeness and wholeness which is something to rejoice about.

**Characteristics of Adversity**

Adversity can take many forms be it a job loss, a major health crisis, the end of a relationship, death of loved ones, or a financial challenge. No matter the form of adversity, it is how we understand and navigate that adversity successfully plays a critical role in our ability to grow and prosper. Let's examine some key characteristics of adversity and explore its meaning:

* **Emotional adversity**: Individuals struggle with grief, anxiety or lack of companionship that arises from separation. A few examples are divorce, death of a loved one, etc.
* **Relational adversity**: Conflicts in relationships whether it is family, friends, church member family, etc. This can leave you feeling abandoned, rejected or feeling unsupported.
* **Financial adversity**: This includes job loss, debt crisis, unexpected expenses because of the separation of additional income or revenue which can cause stress or strain.
* **Health related adversity**. Facing serious illness, dealing with a chronic illness or caring for a loved one who is sick.

**Refined through Adversity: My Story**

In August of 2019, I received what I believed was my miracle—my long-awaited kidney transplant. After enduring 10 years of waiting, filled with the weight of emotions only those walking through such a valley can truly understand, my hope began to rise. Year after year, I had held on, enduring the emotional toll of illness, but when the transplant came, it was as if I had finally been set free. I experienced a joy and peace that words could not fully express, a sense of victory over the years of struggle. It was more than just a new kidney; it was a renewed sense of life, purpose, and a freedom that I had been yearning for.

But then, in August of 2023, I received a call that changed everything. My “miracle” kidney was now in chronic failure. I was told that the kidney had resulted into chronic rejection, and I would need to return to dialysis—a process I thought I had left behind for good.

The disappointment that I felt was overwhelming. In that moment, it felt as though the years of freedom, the victory I had tasted, vanished in an instant. I was plunged back into the depths of emotions I had worked so hard to rise above: fear, frustration, hopelessness. Why, God? I asked over and over. Why again? It felt like rejection, not just of my body but of my spirit, of my belief in the miracle I had celebrated. The flood of negative thoughts began to consume me: Was it my fault? Was my faith in God misplaced? Was this a punishment? What did I do wrong?

As believers, we know adversity is not new. Yet, when it happens to us, it feels personal and overwhelming. I wrestled with thoughts of failure and doubt. But slowly, as I sat in that moment of despair, I was reminded of one unshakeable truth: Every adversity we face is either God-ordained or God-allowed. Nothing happens in our lives without purpose. While I couldn’t understand why I was back in this position again, I had to hold on to the truth that God was still present and His will for my life is still at work.

Every champion knows pain. Every person God uses powerfully knows what it means to walk through fire. For example, Moses, who was chosen to deliver the children of Isreal from bondage from the land of Egypt, had to endure rejection from his people and wandering from the desert, Daniel, who found himself in a lion’s den, or Job, who lost everything, only to see God restore his life double fold, and Joseph was hated by his brothers, sold as a slave, wrongfully accused and prisoned, abandoned only to be given the second reigning position outside of Pharoh during the famine. Lastly, Jesus Himself endured the agony of the cross for the sake of all mankind.

Adversity is not a sign that God has abandoned us—it’s often the very tool He uses to mold us, refine us, and ultimately bring us closer to Him. As a mother, I think of the birthing pains I endured before bringing my children into the world. In the moment, the pain seemed unbearable, but once I held those precious lives in my arms, the pain faded into joy. That’s what adversity does: it gives birth to new seasons, new blessings, and new strength.

When my transplant failed, I didn’t immediately see the blessing in returning to dialysis. I felt like my story was taking a step back. But the truth is, sometimes what feels like a setback is actually a setup for a greater testimony. The Bible reminds us in Psalm 30:5, "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning." (NIV) God’s favor lasts a lifetime, and even in the darkest times of our lives, morning is coming for trouble don’t last always.

Adversity shapes us. It humbles us, teaches us perseverance, and builds in us the resilience we need to fulfill God’s purpose. Every assignment in life, every calling, will involve seasons of hardship, but those very hardships are often the doorway to God’s greatest blessings.

We are not exempt from suffering, but we are empowered to overcome it. 2 Corinthians 4:8-9

says, “We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.” (NIV) These trials are not meant to destroy us but to refine us, to push us forward into the fullness of God’s promises.

In that moment of kidney rejection, I had a choice. I could allow this setback to crush me, or I could choose to stand in faith, trusting that God had a greater plan. As you read this book, I encourage you to look at your own life-altering adversity with the same perspective. God has not abandoned you. Your setback is not the end of your story—it is the stage for your greatest comeback. We are warriors, and through Christ, we are more than conquerors.

**Proper Response to Adversity**

For many of us, it might be easy to blame God for our mishaps or continue to wallow in our cycle of sorrow.  There is a phrase that Dr. Charles Stanley says all the time: "Don’t waste your sorrow.”  He goes on to say, “Nobody likes pain; however, if you have to go through whatever pain that you must endure, then you don’t want to waste the emotion that is developed from that pain, but you would rather grow from it and mature from it instead.”  Growing spiritually during adversity helps develop patience, fortitude and Godly character that allow one to find their purpose and form their core values.  Understanding and responding appropriately to adversity are critical components of growth.  Below are seven strategies for dealing with it effectively:

1. See it as coming from God. According to John 16:13, the Holy Spirit, who is our Advocate who lives inside us, will guide us in all truth, and He will only speak what He hears from God.
2. Understand what God’s goal for that adversity in my life is.
3. Surrender our will to His will.  God’s plan is the best!
4. Live by Faith!  God is faithful and trustworthy!
5. Trust in God and lean not to your own understanding.  Proverbs 3:56 (NIV)
6. Understand and Learn the biblical trust that affirms our growth through adversity.
7. Adversity in God is most effective way for deepening our faith and commitment to Him.

As Christians, our spiritual growth will be determined by seeing adversity as an opportunity, not an obstacle.  Holy spirit’s role is to help us through adversity and help us to grow in relationship of Jesus Christ.  So, how do we face adversity?  By believing that God will bring us through it, and He will walk with us through the process and never fail us.  Having a personal relationship with God is necessary to survive and live in this world.  For everyday wickedness is evil desires and deeds are heightened and present.  Only through the knowledge of God and His righteousness, grace, and joy can we overcome and live the abundant life we desire.

**Reflection/Recap**

* Adversity is inevitable in a Christian life
* God uses adversity as a tool for Spiritual Maturity
* We have a promise that God will be with us and never leave us
* All things work together for my good

**Call To Action:**

**Identify a Challenge**: Write down the characteristics of adversity that you experienced (i.e. personal, financial, emotional) and how it impacted on your mental and physical well-being.

**Reflect on Growth**: How did you navigate the challenge? What did you learn from that experience?

**Chapter 2**

**Not a Victim, but a Victor**

Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors
through Him who loved us. - - Romans 8:37

Our identities are usually defined by our experiences. More importantly, painful experiences often leave a long-lasting imprint on how we view ourselves and our self-worth. For many of us setbacks introduce us to self-doubt that leads us to believe that we are defined by our setbacks and challenges. But the real truth is our struggles does not define who we are nor does it determine our outcome. Although our struggles are present and real, our true self is defined by who God says we are as individuals.

**Redefining our identity through Adversity**

Recognizing who we are when faces with adversities provides us with the foundation of strength, motivation, and determination that allows us to persevere when under pressure. When dealing with pain or setbacks, it can lead us to assess ourselves through the lens of loss, failure or rejection. By associating ourselves with our adversities, we often believe the falsehoods about who we are. We begin to define ourselves as being “broken”, “unworthy”, and “not enough.” The good things is the fact that God sees beyond our circumstances and sees our true self. God’s love for us supersede our problems leaving us to see redemption in His saving grace. This grace gives us the hope and strength to overcome our situations which helps us to build up character that defines who we are which is a Champion!

**Living as Conquerors in Christ**

Champions are created out of overcoming adversities. A clear understanding of one’s identity is recognized by how we deal with our setbacks. Once we recognize our identity lies with how God defines us, living our lives victoriously become easier. Our setbacks or challenges refines us rather than defines us. Roman 8:37 says ***“Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.” (NLT)*** This verse alters our mindset where we see ourselves as conquerors in Christ rather than victims. Being a conqueror suggest that we will have adversities in our lives, but we are not to worry for it is through Jesus Christ that we are able to overcome our challenges for John 16:33 states ***“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.”*** ***(NIV)*** So, rather than seeing ourselves as victims, we are to see ourselves as victor for our strength comes from God to overall our pain and setback.

**Personal Declarations and Affirmations**

I want to take a moment to walk you through three powerful affirmations that helped me to keep moving forward when faced with five major losses in my life (my faith, my mindset, my health, my relationship and my finances). Each one of those losses had a significant impact in my life and my ability to overcome these losses in the future. These five personal declarations and affirmations transformed the way that think and act while going through my challenges.

Recite these declarations and affirmations daily for maximum impact and transformation within your spirit:

Affirmation 1: “I am more than a conqueror through Christ who strengthens me.”

Affirmation 2: “My setback does not define me or dictate my outcome.”

Affirmation 3: “I am Enough!”

Affirmation 4: “My God shall supply all my needs according to His riches and glory.”

Affirmation 5: “I have never seen the righteous forsaken or begging for bread!”

These affirmations train your mindset from victim to victor. Through the eyes of God, you are victorious and empowered!

**Divine Purpose**

Divine purpose is the plan that God has for our individuals’ lives. Each one of us have been given an assignment by God to fulfill on earth. Our lives are meaningless if we do not complete our given assignment. It is written that our salvation came with a cost, so it is our charge to search out and complete what we have been called to do on earth.

For example, In an exercise that I participated in called “Positive plates” at a leadership training session, we were given instructions to write on a plate the attributes that we see in the individuals that was in the room. We were given instructions to choose at least 7 people to write one positive word on their plate. I was amazed at the attributes written on my plate by which most of them defined my character were strong, intelligent, smart, resilient, powerful, anointed, strong, and humble. As believers, we are created in God’s image and each one of those attributes exist in Christ.

Our lives our meaningless if we fail to fulfill God’s plan for it. God’s purpose is general, and it applies to everyone, and it affects every area of our lives including work and ministry. Jeremiah 1:5 says ***“I knew you before I formed you in your mother’s womb. Before you were born I set you apart and appointed you as my prophet to the nations.”*** This text suggests that embracing God’s love and grace through faith in Jesus Christ represents our likeness and character of who we are as Christians. When we identify with who we are and our divine purpose it is easy to complete our divine purpose. In Isaiah 43:1, God says ***“to his children not to fear for He has redeemed and called them by name - you belong to Me.***" This verse reminds us that our worth comes from within rather than external influences. God calls everyone by name intimately knowing them well beyond any injuries suffered in our trials and heartaches.

**Reflection/Recap**

In this chapter, we explored what it means to define yourself not by your pain but by your identity in Christ. We learned:

* Painful experiences can make us question our worth, but our identity is rooted in God’s truth, not in life’s hardships.
* Our self-worth is not tied to our past but to who God says we are—redeemed, known by name, and cherished.
* Living as conquerors in Christ means embracing resilience, seeing our challenges as steps toward growth rather than obstacles.

**Call to Action**

1. **Create Your Declarations**: Based on the insights from *Isaiah 43:1* and *Romans 8:37*, create three personal declarations that affirms your identity in Christ.

**Chapter 3**

**So As a Man Think**

**For as he thinks in his heart, so *is* he – Proverbs 23:7a**

**Introduction**

The heart is the center hub of our emotions. It holds our mind, will and intellect. It is where the place where our life, strength, and understanding exist. The heart is the place where all our thoughts, passions, and decisions are made. Our thoughts frame who we are and who we will become. Proverbs 23:7a says “As a man thinks in his heart, so is he.” This text gives us an understanding that it is what’s in a person’s heart that defines that individual character and true inner self. Usually what a person does and says can be two different things.

It is our thoughts that impact our lives and how we bring them into alignment to build up resilience and courage during adversary. Our minds are powerful. The thoughts we nurture can shape our perspective, influence our decisions, and even define the course of our lives. When we go through pain or setbacks, it’s easy for limiting beliefs to take root that tell us we’re unworthy, incapable, or destined for failure. According to Romans 12:2, God tells us to our renewed mind, a mindset that is set on God’s truth rather than fear, doubt, or negativity.

**Killing Your Inner Critic**

Each of us has an inner critic, an inner voice that heightens our insecurities, past hurts and limitations. This voice distorts our view of ourselves, undermines our confidence and limits our God-given potential. When we let our inner critic dominate, we believe the lies that it says about who we are and what we can achieve. Nevertheless, we have the power to silence our inner critic and renew our mind by believing in the word of God and trusting in what it says.

**Confronting Limiting Beliefs**

Limiting beliefs begin as negative thoughts, if left unchecked, it impacts every area of our lives. These beliefs convince us that our self-worth and values are defined by our pain or setbacks. Recognizing and addressing these limiting beliefs is essential to breaking free from the negativity that holds us back. When I was going through a divorce, I no longer felt like the strong, dominant person that I was at that moment. Guilt, shame, and failure were my dominant emotions. I began to adapt a sense that I had nothing to offer and that my accomplishments did not matter. Once I identified and confront those limiting beliefs, I began to saturate my thoughts with affirming scriptures that helped me to overcome negative thoughts and live a life of resilience and confidence. Transformation begins when we reject old, limiting beliefs and renew our minds with God’s promises.

**Healing Thoughts**

It is essential to let go of a negative mindset and embrace a mindset that brings peace and healing. Forgiveness is a powerful tool for healing. When we choose to forgive, we free ourselves from thoughts of negativity and bitterness and replace our thoughts with peace. Colossians 3:13 says ***“Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.”*** Our text defines that holding onto grudges towards others can cloud our mindset, keeping us bound to past pain. By forgiving others, we are freeing ourselves from the emotional and mental bondage of unforgiveness.

**Kingdom Mindset**

To live resiliently, it's vital that we align our thoughts with God's values rather than worldly ones. A Kingdom mindset encourages us to see ourselves the way God sees us and focus on God's eternal perspective. Adopting a Kingdom mindset helps us begin to see ourselves from God's perspective. Ephesians 2:10 says ***“For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” (NIV)*** In our text, we are reminded that we were made for good works through Christ Jesus. With this mindset in place, trials become growth opportunities as God creates and shapes us further for his purposes no matter our trials or circumstances. In Isaiah 64:8, God is identified as the "Potter”, and we are the “Clay” shaping and refining us each step of the way until finally He forms us into perfect vessels fit to for the Master’s use.

A Kingdom mindset helps us shed worldly values that add stress and confusion, in favor of spiritual growth and obedience to God instead. Matthew 6:33 calls us to “Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness” before all else, setting our minds on the things above and not on earthly materials or personal desires. By prioritizing Kingdom values over everything else, we will find peace and meaning that transcend any obstacle.

**Reflect/Recap**

* + We have the power within us to kill our inner critic by aligning our thoughts with the Word of God and its promises.
	+ Forgiveness frees us from our past hurts which creates a space for healing and peace.
	+ We are God’s handiwork create for purpose and fulfilling Kingdom principles on earth.
	+ Aligning with Kingdom values helps us to develop resilience in challenging times.

**Call to Action**

1. **Silence Your Inner Critic:** For each thought, find a scriptural truth to counter it, and write them down as daily affirmations.
2. **Adopt a Kingdom Mindset:** Each morning, reflect on your God-given gifts, and pray for the courage to use them according to His purpose.