Della Major

September 13, 2024

Outline

**Title: Discover, Decide, and Do: A Christian Woman’s Guide to Hope and Resilience**

**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. Confronting Limiting beliefs
3. Overcoming Limiting beliefs
4. Healing thoughts
5. Kingdom mindset
6. Reflect/Recite/Call to Action

**Journey to Resilient Living**

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

1. Resilience: What does mean?
2. Resilient Faith
3. Joseph’s Journey: Examples of Resilience
4. The Big Bounce Back
5. Courage to Walk it Out: Foundation in God’ promises
6. Reflect/Recite/Call to Action

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

1. Pushing Past Pain into Power
2. Promises over Adversity
3. Recognizing God’s Abundant Provision
4. Reflect/Recite/Call to Action

**Chapter 6: Blueprint to becoming Resilient**

1. Self-awareness: The Foundation of Resilience
2. Self-care: Taking Care of Yourself
3. A Biblical Path to Resilience
4. Mindfulness: Being Present with God
5. Positive Relationship: Building a Circle of Trust
6. Reflect/Recite/Call to Action

**Chapter 7: Resilient Living**

1. Be Strong and Courageous
2. Promise over Adversity
3. Trusting God in Your Wilderness experience
4. Reflect/Recite/Call to Action

**Chapter 8: Turning trials into triumph**

1. From lemons to lemonade
2. Embracing the Pruning Process
3. All things working for my good
4. Reflect/Recite/Call to Action

**Changing the Game**

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

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

**Chapter 10: Empowered for Purpose**

1. Learning to Trust in God again
2. Reconciling Faith and Friendship
3. Rebuilding Relationship
4. Discover Your Uniqueness
5. Reflect/Recite/Call to Action

**Dedication**

This book is dedicated to my Aunt Mary, who was my map and model of being an overcomer and how resilient living can look like when you give it all over to God. I will always miss you! Love, your niece Della!

**Acknowledgement**

**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 (NLT)***

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 (NLT)***

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**

The enemy strategy is to convince us that we are powerless, that our setbacks defines us, and that we will never rise above our trials and tribulations. In order to live a life victorious and empowered, we must have a renewed mindset where we are no longer victims but victors. A “victim mindset” says that we are “not enough” or “I can’t”. This type of mindset thrives on self-pity, hopelessness, and feeling of helplessness.

Living with three major health challenges made it easy from me to fall into the trap of a victim mindset. I constantly had the feeling that everything was working against me. My finances were extremely tight, my relationship was strained following my divorce, my health continued to feel and nothing seemed to be working for me no matter how much I tried to make things better. I simply could not break free from bad things always happening. My trials had a way of making me feel hopeless and powerless. The enemy strategy was working until I made up my mind to conform that “victim mentality” heads on.

Romans 8:37 declares that ***“Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.”*** This scripture reminded me of whom I am in Christ Jesus. I am not just a survivor by a thriver. When life challenges are difficult, we must break free and confront the ‘victim mentality” when it occurs. God has given us authority and power to reclaim our lives and walk in victory each and every day. Redefining ourselves and recognizing our identity formed through Jesus Christ.

Recognizing who we are when faced 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 supersedes 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**

Building resilience is a life-long practice. It is not a destination that you simply arrive at, but a constant practice of living as conquerors around the various nuances of adversities that appear in our lives. Living as conquerors is not about never facing bad times but facing those bad times head-on. Romans 8:37 says that as believers in Jesus Christ we are “**more than conquerors**” in this world. “**More than conquerors**” signifies that we have the ability and wisdom to achieve victory over the many challenges that we face daily, and that ability comes from Jesus Christ and our relationship with Him. Believing that we are more than conquerors allow us to approach difficult situations more bolding and peacefully for our trust is in God who gives us the strength to overcome those challenges. To live a life as a conqueror is to execute Kingdom concepts and ideas daily. By trusting God, we do what is good by faith. God has already declared us as conquerors. Victory is our become Jesus Christ has already overcome the sins of the world which set us free from sin and placed us back in right standing with God.

For many years, I would attend worship service looking and feeling like a champion, however, my personal life was in disarray. Although I loved God and I was a born-again Christian, I was not living my life as a conqueror and I was not having success in my life where I could live for God, fulfill my calling, and help His people. I struggled financially and I know that I was not living the abundant life that God had promised, nor was I maximizing my full potential. It was not until I began to develop a closer walk with God by believing and applying the Holy scriptures into my life, that I came to learn what it truly means to live an abundant life and become “more than conqueror” in that life.

Living as conquerors means that you will have the confidence to know that before you encounter any life challenges or any trials or tribulations, you can defeat it for God is on your side and no matter what He will never leave you nor forsake you. Instead, He will walk you through it. You see, 1 John 4:4 says, ***“You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.”***   According to our text, God has given us the Holy Spirit to live on the inside of us and to guide and teach us His Kingdom principles of living as conqueror in Christ Jesus. So, when you know who you are in Christ, then with the Holy Spirit living inside of you, there is nothing impossible for God to handle. It is important to remember that the enemy wants only to kill, rob and destroy all that God has for us (John 10:10). He wants to make you small – dumb you down – make you tiny and tiny soul, so you can have a tiny, frustrated life, but Jesus came to give us life and to live that life more abundantly and victoriously as conquerors and champions.

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 refine us rather than define us. 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 (NLT)***

**Introduction**

The heart is the center hub of our emotions. It holds our mind, will and intellect. It is 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. Our thoughts determine how we act, make decisions, or carryout our everyday plans. 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. It is what we hold dear to us is how we respond. If our thoughts are filled with doubt, feat or uncertainty, then our actions will reflect those types of thoughts. However, if our thoughts are filled with trust, hope, and peace, we can experience real transformation, healing and victory.

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. To live a resilient life, we must begin to take captive every thought that do not align with God’s promises or His truth and we must silence the inner critic voice when it shows up.

**Killing Your Inner Critic**

Each of us has an inner critic, an inner voice that heightens our insecurities, past hurts and limitations. The inner critic voice judges, criticizes, 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.

Each one of us have the potential to live an abundant life, maximize our full potential and carryout our God-given assignment. For many, it might appear to be easy, but for others it is not. To illustrate, it has always been easy for me to support and elevate someone else as they are in pursuit of their purpose, but when it came to me, I found myself having thoughts of not being good enough or imperfect. For me to get the recognition that I needed, things must be perfect, and it had to be the best. For years, I struggled with the spirit of perfectionism. If things were not perfect or the best, then I was not perfect or the best. My value system was based on receiving positive affirmations from my parents, family and others. If I did not receive them, it impacted how I saw myself and my overall success. In addition, toxic words being said over and over in my life in my early childhood by family and friends shaped how I would act of live my life. Those words heightened the inner critical voice of fear and doubt that would leave an open door for my self-esteem and self-confidence to be diminished. It took many years of seeking therapy, and studying and applying the promises of God in my life before I learned how to overcome the inner critical voice within my thoughts. Once I made up my mind to deal with my inner critical voice, my behavior and actions changed.

When silencing the inner critical voice, it is important for you to know your worth is not based on your strength or your abilities, but it is based on what God has already said that you are. 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.”***  In us all, we have what we need to accomplish whatever God intended for us. It is our belief system that helps us to lean more on the promises of God rather than what we perceived them to be. Our inner critical voice only comes when we lack trust and faith in God and rely on ourselves and what we see. No one is perfect; however, it is our imperfection that helps us to mature and gain wisdom and experience to weather the many trials and tribulations that arise in our life. Every day I battle to silence my inner critical voice for it has blocked and hindered me from moving forward in pursuit of my purpose. The good news is that you and I have it within us do good works and complete our God-given assignment and to live the abundant life that God has promised us.

**Confronting Limiting Beliefs**

Limiting beliefs are false perceptions we hold about ourselves that restrict our growth. They are rooted in fear of failure, fear of rejection or fear of inadequacies. These beliefs tell us what we can or cannot do, creating an invisible barrier to our personal and professional development. Limiting beliefs begin as negative thoughts, if left unchecked, it impacts every area of your life. These beliefs convince us that our self-worth and values are defined by our pain or setbacks. For example, 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. My divorce had me trapped in questioning my self-worth, my identity and my abilities as a Christian Women leader and Minister. My journey of self-discovery and purpose was riddled with self-doubts and limiting beliefs for my value and beliefs system was built on the American dream: Marriage, Family, good job, and good home, but that dream was demolished the moment my husband asked me for the divorce. My identity was shattered to a point where I did not know who I was anymore which fueled self-doubt creating a cycle of limiting beliefs that elevated the negative self-talk and inner critical voice that surfaced often throughout my adult life.

Limiting beliefs can change your life by creating a self-awareness that stops you from chasing after your dreams, forming healthy relationships with people, and creating change in any area of your life. Limiting beliefs can sometimes act as a defense mechanism to protect us from pain. Our subconscious mind remembers past negative experiences and tries to prevent us from being hurt all over again. This type of subconscious mind led me to develop negative emotions like imposter syndrome, anxiety, and procrastination trapping me into a cycle of sorrow and doubt. It was not until I began to identify and confront those limiting beliefs that I started the journey to break free from my inner critical voice and live a life based on the promises of God. ***2 Corinthians 10:5 says “casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,”*** In our text, the Apostle Paul, clearly outline that battle is in our mind. To live a life of hope and resilience, we must capture and saturate our every thought with God’s word and bring it to obedience to Christ Jesus. Transformation begins when we reject old, limiting beliefs and renew our minds with God’s promises.

**Overcoming Limiting beliefs**

It was through my life experiences that I began to realize that the limiting beliefs and self-destructive ideas that held me back dictated what I choose to do in the future. Recognizing and challenging my inner thoughts was the most important and necessary step towards my inner healing in my mind, body and soul. Nobody said it would be easy, but when I looked back and saw how much I have grown and developed, I was amazed.

Knowing the source of your limiting beliefs and overcoming it will take time and energy. Its time to confront those limiting beliefs head on and empower yourself by interrupting and changing those beliefs to help you develop more confidence which will reduce self-doubt and silence your inner critical voice in a more direct way.  So, here are 6 things that I used to help me get started in breaking out of my limiting beliefs and turning down my critic voice:

**1. Identify Your Limiting Beliefs**

* Write down and reflect on your thoughts and notice if it goes the same way over and over.
* Write them down to have the mental picture: For example, "I am not good enough” or “I don’t deserve it.”

**2. Challenge These Beliefs**

* Ask yourself, "Is this belief based on fact or fear?"
* Counteract every thought with what God says about you.

**3. Replace Negative Thoughts with Positive Affirmations**

* Use affirmations to reaffirm God’s promises in your life.

**4. Take Small Steps Towards Your Goals**

* Set measurable and attainable goals for your life and your future.
* Celebrate your mini wins.

**5. Seek Support**

* Surround yourself with positive people who will empower you and celebrate you.
* Get a Coach or a mentor.

**6. Practice Self-Compassion**

* Don’t be too critical of yourself and give yourself some grace when you mess up.
* Look at every failure as an opportunity for growth and improvement.

These methods changed the way I approached my trials and tribulations and now I started seeing obstacles as opportunities for growth and wisdom, not a deterrent. Every day I work hard to develop a growth mindset rather than a fixed and limited mindset. I now have the confidence to pursue my divine purpose by maximizing my full potential in every area of my life. By confronting your limiting beliefs and replacing them with positive and powerful transforming thoughts your breakthrough will destroy the mental walls that blocks your success and put you on a path to living a resilient and victorious life.

**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. Forgiveness is the decision to let go of past hurts you experienced from others by exercising an act of compassion rather than revenge or hate. Forgiving others brings closer, resolution, and freedom. Forgiveness is the practical way of preventing the pain from your past to dictate the outcome of your future.

Throughout my childhood, I experienced abandonment and rejection issues caused by the lack of love I received from my parents. Those issues impacted how I interacted with people that were close family members or close friends. I found it hard to show any compassion to individuals who would hurt me or cause me pain with their words or through their actions. I adopted an eye for an eye mentality. 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.”*** This text defines that holding onto grudges towards others can cloud our mindset, keeping us bound to past pain. This text opened my eyes of understanding about unforgiveness that I held towards myself.

As the oldest siblings, I had a lot responsibility placed on my shoulder at an early age. I had to help my mother with a lot of burdens that was a parent responsibility and not a child. When I could not meet her expectations, I was punished. My relief came when I decided to leave the safety of my mother’s home and venture out on my own at the age of 17. I carried a lot of guilt and shame for leaving my sisters and brother for I had adopted an attitude that it was my responsibility to stay and help take care of them. For a long time, I could not forgive myself for leaving them behind. It was through therapy and reading scriptures about forgiveness that I understood what true forgiveness means and how it brings about peace and healing in your mind and soul.

When you forgive yourself, you let go of guilt and shame and start to feel better mentally and spiritually. Forgiving others frees you from anger and resentment, allowing you to build stronger, more compassionate relationships. It was not until I forgave my mother and father did I experience true healing freeing myself from the emotional and mental bondage of unforgiveness. When we choose to forgive, we free ourselves from thoughts of negativity and bitterness and replace our thoughts with healing and peace.

**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.

**Journey to Resilient Living**

**Chapter 4**

**Defining Resilience: A Biblical Perspective**

***For a righteous man may fall seven times and rise again,  
But the wicked shall fall by calamity – Proverbs 24:16 (NIV)***

**Resilience: What does it Mean?**

Merriam-Webster Dictionary describes resilience as the ability to quickly recover from or adapt easily to misfortunes or changes. However, from a Biblical perspective resilience is much deeper. Resilience is the ability to bounce back from problems and return to normality. It is a process of experiencing divine renewal and restoration. Many people believe that resilience is something you can achieve on your own. Biblical resilience, however, involves turning to God for strength and grace in difficult situations rather than relying on yourself. It is important to remember that resilience is more than just bouncing back. It is also about remaining strong despite trials and tribulations.

**Resilient Faith**

We all know that resilience is bouncing back from life’s challenges. Resilience empowers us to meet those challenges head-on with trust and faith in God who always provides a way of escape for those who believes in Him. Faith builds resilience by helping us to view our life challenges not from our own eye-view but from God’s eye-view keeping us from being weighed down with the burdens and stress that might arise while enduring our life challenges.

Resilient faith is the ability to stand firm through your adversities. Faith in the midst of the storm, enduring through trouble. Resilient faith is not like a light switch, we turn off and on, but it is something we grow over time. We never know when we might face adversity, but it is important for us all to pursue after resilient faith. So, how do we handle the disappointment of life? By Faith! Habakkuk 2:4 ***“..the just shall live by faith.”***

To build resilient faith, we must find our confidence in God and His character. Psalm 3:3 says, ***“But You, O Lord, are a shield for me, my glory and the One who lifts up my head.”*** Trust of God’s character gives us the confidence to trust in Him knowing that nothing is impossible for God. It takes resilient faith to over the adversities we face today. In my healing journey, I have faced numerous setbacks that related in loss of income, removal of my kidneys, heart complications and now diabetes. Nevertheless, I know God to be a healer and a sustainer. Mark 16:17-18 ***And these signs* *will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons;* *they will speak in new tongues;* *18they will pick up snakes* *with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on* *sick people, and they will get well.”***  Jesus gave this promise to all who believed on Him and in His word. Everyday that I am alive I know that I am a living miracle being used by God show illustrate what resilient faith looks like.

In order to build resilient faith, we must counter the lies of the enemy with trust that we know about God. When we face adversity today, we must hold close to the truth and the fulfill promises of God dear to our heart. God has not brought us this far to fail us or leave us behind. Adversities can be challenging and it can be difficult to keep things straight in our minds, but when we rely on the God’s promises and His trust given to all believers through His word that is what build up resilient faith and given us the strength to weather any storm that we face for we know that trials and tribulations produces patience and endurance which leads to resilient living. To illustrate resilient faith, let look at the story of Joseph.

**Joseph's Journey: Examples of Resilience**

Joseph's journey starts with betrayal, hardship and suffering. Joseph's brothers were jealous of him and plotted his death, but instead sold him into slave trade. Joseph was sold into slavery by Potiphar's house. He was given the position of ruler until his false accusation was made by Potiphar's wife. Joseph's faith in God was unshaken even in prison. He was given favor by the prison warden, which gave him an honorable position where he had to oversee all of the prisoners in the jail and the events that took place. Joseph was in charge of the prison and the prisoners. The warden did not have to worry about them because the Lord was always with him. He translated dreams of two prisoners (one being Pharaoh’s cupbearer) and predicted that he would be released from prison. Joseph asked that the cupbearer call him back when he delivered the Pharaoh's cupbearer, but the cupbearer failed to do so.

Joseph had the chance to interpret a Pharaoh's dream two years later. Joseph was called to interpret a disturbing dream which predicted seven years prosperity, followed by seven years famine. Joseph's interpretation of the dream impressed Pharaoh, and he elevated him to the position as governor, second in authority only to Pharaoh. Joseph's wisdom and administrative abilities allowed him to save Egypt, along with his family, from the famine. Joseph's siblings came to Egypt in search of food and eventually discovered the truth. Joseph's reaction to the actions of his brothers is a testimony to his faith and character. He reconciled and forgave his brothers and brought them all to Egypt where they could live in peace and abundance.

Joseph's story demonstrates the power of forgiveness, faith and resilience. The story of Joseph shows how faith and character can bring blessings and redemption, even when faced with adversity or betrayal. Joseph's journey, from a pit into a position of influence, is a powerful reminder that God works through even the most difficult circumstances to accomplish His plans. Genesis 50:20 says ***You intended to harm me, but God intended it all for good. He brought me to this position so I could save the lives of many people.*** ***(NLT***). This verse captures the essence of Joseph’s story, highlighting God's sovereign plan and redemption even when faced with adversity. Joseph was able to maintain his faith in spite of the setbacks and trials he faced. Joseph's story is a lesson in perseverance, despite the seemingly dire circumstances. Joseph's resilience reminds us that we should stay true to our values, even when life seems unfair.

**The Big Bounce Back**

My scars tell the story of my trauma, but they also show my resilience and strength in overcoming adversity. Although it is easy to focus only on the negative effects of the trauma on my body, each scar shows that I have overcome my situation. My mother's and father's medical histories reflect a history of heart problems, cancer, lupus and diabetes. Many people will think that this was inevitable. My faith in God, as healer, and my trust in God are the foundation of my resilience.

I remained steadfast and trusted God even when my health was in crisis. Instead of succumbing to the despair and bitterness that comes with dealing with life-altering events such as a divorce or a negative diagnosis, I stayed strong and did not give in to the feelings of anger and frustration. I was able to trust in God's plan for my future and believe that my journey had a purpose. Romans 8:28 states ***“And we know that God causes everything to work togetherfor the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.” (NLT)***

This steadfastness helped me to navigate the daily challenges I face, even though I undergo dialysis 3 days a week. Isaiah 54.17a says, ***“No weapon formed against you shall prosper, and every tongue which rises against you in judgment you shall condemn.” (NKJV)*** The verse emphasizes the fact that it is possible for a weapon to form but it won't prosper. When we say weapon, what we mean is any suffering that we may face on our journey. Job is a good example. Job suffered great hardships in his lifetime. Job lost his fortune, his children, and even health, but he never cursed God. Instead, he worshipped God and thanked Him for his blessings.

In life, you will face challenges and setbacks that you think you cannot overcome, but you will discover that over time the pain that you thought you could not overcome was the setup for your big bounce back. It was the journey that God had you to endure so to build up your faith and trust in Him, and to give you the power and wisdom that you need to move you forward.

**Courage to Walk it Out: Foundation on God's Promises**

Resilience is not disguising pain or turning away from our struggles; rather it’s realizing that in times of weakness, our strength only comes from God. In 2 Corinthians 12:9, the Apostle Paul wrote ***“And He said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness. Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.” (NKJV)*** This means when things seem hopeless God's grace becomes our shield and fortress to carry us forward and through it.

Romans 5:3 says, ***“Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope.” (NIV).*** This text reminds us that each time we face difficulty God uses it as an opportunity to refine us further and deepen our faith. Resilience gives us the courage to face adversity head-on and to rise back up each time we fall, trusting in God to use our experiences to shape us into His image. It is in challenging times that God’s presence is near to guide us through it. Psalm 119:105 says ***“Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.” (NIV)*** His way offers guidance, courage and wisdom on how to build up our confidence which gives us insight and courage on strengthening our faith while building confidence in Him.

**Reflect/Recap**

* Resilience is not based on our own abilities but on God’s grace and strength.
* Resilient faith is the ability to stand firm through adversities. It is something that is build over time.
* The journey of resilience is ongoing and trust in God’s purpose build up our faith.
* God is the source of every comeback, providing the strength and grace we need to rise again.
* Facing adversity head-on demonstrates our trust in God’s promises and His plan for our lives.

**Call to Action**

1. **Journal Your Journey:** Identify an area in your life where you need to demonstrate resilience. Write about the strength God provided you and how that experience shaped your resilience.

**Chapter 5**

**Thriving in the Midst of Adversity**

***For I know the plans I have for you,” says  
the Lord. “They are plans for good and not for  
disaster, to give you a future and a hope.  
-- Jeremiah 29:11 (NLT***)

Jeremiah 29:11, encourages us to embrace life challenges as opportunities for growth. Understanding that our journey through our life challenges is living testimonials of God’s faithfulness and grace. In 2 Corinthians 12:9, God’s grace was sufficient. Although Apostle Paul was used to illustrate God’s mercy and grace in his life, he was not exempt from life suffering and afflictions. In 2 Corinthians 4:17, Apostle Paul says, “***For our present troubles are small and won’t last very long. Yet they produce for us a glory that vastly outweighs them and will last forever!” (NLT)*** In our text, Apostle Paul understood that His afflictions could not compare to the Glory he would receive in the end. For it is not about avoiding adversity, but rather flourishing in the midst of it.

**Pushing Past Pain into Power**

Pain is inevitable, but it is not the end of our story. God can transform our deepest suffering into the most powerful source of purpose. God can use our pain to encourage and grow others if we let Him. Let's look at Joni Eareckson Tada's book "Joni: A Memorable Story" to see how her diving accident left her quadriplegic at the age of 17. Joni speaks about her chronic pain that she deals with daily and how God’s love has transformed both her life and her faith. Faith that allowed her to overcome her daily suffering and pain. Her message inspires people who are facing challenges in their life and helps them overcome their limitations and circumstances with a determined smile.  She explains how to remain satisfied with God despite disappointments and suffering. Joni offers practical insights to help you find hope in any hardship.

The only way to maintain a hope that is unshakeable is by building resilience and strength in the face of pain. This can be done through God's promises. 2 Corinthians 4: 8-10 says ***“We are pressed on every side by troubles, but we are not crushed. We are perplexed, but not driven to despair. 9We are hunted down, but never abandoned by God. We get knocked down, but we are not destroyed. 10Through suffering, our bodies continue to share in the death of Jesus so that the life of Jesus may also be seen in our bodies.” (NLT)*** In our text, Apostle Paul explains that our resilience and strength comes from how we choose to view things. This has the ability to either take away our hope or give it to us. Let pain refine you, not define you. God can use your pain to shape your character and prepare you for greater things. Your story, like that of Joni Eareckson Tada, can heal others.

**Promises Over Adversity**

Adversity can quickly drain you of energy. But by looking beyond ourselves and instead turning our focus toward God and his promises for healing and strength, true thriving can be achieved. His Word offers comforting words of hope, restoration, and victory. ***“For no matter how many promises God has made, they are “Yes” in Christ. And so through him the “Amen” is spoken by us to the glory of God.” (2 Corinthians 2:20, NIV)*** God’s promises are sure and provide a solid foundation when everything else is unstable.  Isaiah 40:8 (NIV) says it all ***“The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God endures forever.”*** God's words remain constant, unchanging, reliable. So, when you are feeling overwhelmed remind yourself: God's promises is constant and reliable and it shall not return void.

God's promises help shift our mindset from fear and doubt to faith-filled confidence, as they remind us, according to Hebrews 10:23 ***"Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful."*** Declaring His promises aligns your actions with His truth so you feel His power at work in your situation strengthening your faith while creating an atmosphere of hope and anticipation! This practice not only helps to strengthen your faith but it also creates an atmosphere of hope and expectation.

**Recognizing God's Abundant Provision**

God can use anything, anyone, any circumstances, or opportunities, to provide for us. We must have the faith to trust that His resources are limitless and that He is always working behind the scenes for our good. When times get rough, it can be easy to feel powerless against life's challenges. Yet God reminds us in His word that He already provided all we need for a godly lifestyle. ***2 Peter 1:3 His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.(NIV)*** God's abundance helps shift our mindset from scarcity to abundance as He promises us that He will supply for our needs even during difficult seasons - ***"My God will meet your needs according to the riches of His glory in Christ Jesus" Philippians 4:19*** ***(NIV)***. So even when your future seems uncertain, trust that He will provide for you!

Thriving is not simply paying bills and gaining money but being able to live an abundant live where are applying kingdom principles in every area of your life rather good or bad. It can be easy to feel powerless when faced with difficult challenges. However, Christ gives you strength in times of adversity. Philippians 4:13 says "***I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." (NIV)*** This verse is a powerful reminder that no obstacle is too great when you rely on Christ’s strength. What makes up who we are is not determined by what has happened, but by what God says about us. ***2 Corinthians 5:17 says “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.” (NKJV)*** Accept your identity as God's beloved child who was chosen for good works and equipped with the right tools at their disposal.

**Reflect/Recap**

* Pain, when surrendered to God, becomes a powerful tool for growth and transformation.
* God’s promises are a firm foundation, offering hope and stability during adversity.
* Believing in your God-given potential empowers you to face adversity with confidence and faith.

**Call To Action**

1. Identify three promises from God’s Word that resonate with your current challenges. Write them down and place them somewhere visible.

**Chapter 6: Blueprint to Becoming Resilient**

***Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith,  
 who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross,  
 despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand  
of the throne of God. – Hebrews 12:2 (NKJV)***

A blueprint is a design plan or drawing on how you build something. The same goes for a blueprint for resilience based on the bible which provides us with strategies and spiritual principles to help us develop our comeback muscles following a major loss, financial hardship or health crisis. We were created in the image of God to represent Him on earth and to have dominion and subdue it. (***Genesis 1:26-28, NIV***) So, as Christians, we are called not just to survive but to thrive. It’s about regaining back our strength, rediscovering our identity, and rebuilding our future by partnering with God.

In this world, we will face many challenges. We can begin to feel overwhelmed, leaving us broken and uncertain about the future, but Jesus said in John 16:33 ***“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.”*** We have a promise from Jesus that we have on the inside of us the ability to be an overcomer.

Resilience is not a trait we’re born with; it’s cultivated through intentional practices such as self-care, self-awareness, and mindfulness. These practices are part of the blueprint of resilience grounded in God’s word that equips us and guides us through the trials and tribulations we face in our lives and helps us to emerge victorious and empowered. For example, as a person who does dialysis three times a week, it is important for me to exercise self-care and self-awareness in all things that I do. By resting my body following a treatment, I am helping my body regain the strength that I need to carry out God’s divine plan for my life. By not resting, I am aware that I am jeopardizing my health which will hinder my ability to be a vessel fit for the Master’s use. Self-care gives us the strength and endurance to carry out God’s plan in my life while self-awareness provides me the wisdom to make the right decisions which will impact my outcome in a more favorable way.

This chapter will guide you in building a “blueprint” to help you become resilient in every area of your life. This blueprint involves developing self-awareness, exercising self-care, embracing mindfulness, and fostering positive relationships. These principles, grounded in God’s word, will equip you to rise above challenges and setbacks, redefine your identity, and fulfill your God-given potential.

**Self-Awareness: The Foundation of Resilience**

Self-awareness is the first step toward building resilience. This involves being competent, confident, committed, and compassionate. It involves understanding your emotions, recognizing your triggers, and discovering your God-given identity. Self-awareness journey is a way of inviting Holy Spirit into your heart to reveal areas for healing and growth.

Self-awareness helps you build resilience, which is the ability to bounce back from setbacks. By being more aware of yourself, you can use self-awareness to recognize and adjust your mental patterns when faced with challenges and setbacks. Self-awareness helps you recognize your strengths, weaknesses, and triggers so you can make better decisions and adjust your behavior appropriately. Self-awareness helps you build resilience for any setback that arises in your life. Resilience doesn’t make your problems go away, but resilience can provide you with the tools and strategies to see past them, find enjoyment in life and manage stress better.

**Self-care: Taking Care of Yourself**

Self-care involves taking care of yourself. It means prioritizing your needs and no one else. Self-care is about living your life more intentionally. Self-care is about improving your physical and mental wellbeing. Self-care means living life on your own terms and enjoying it to the fullest.

Jesus modeled self-care by regularly withdrawing to rest and pray, such as in Mark 6:31: ***“Then Jesus said, “Let’s go off by ourselves to a quiet place and rest awhile…”*** Self-care can help you to recharge and reconnect with God. As believers of Jesus Christ, exercising self-care is essential in fulfilling your God-given mandate. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 states, ***"Don’t you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, 20for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body." (NLT)*** In our text, taking care of your physical health is an act of worship and it honors God when you prioritize the need to exercise self-care which involves nurturing your body, mind, and spirit. Self-care is a crucial step for building resilience.

**A Biblical Path to Resilience**

Matthew 22:39b says ***“…Love your neighbor as yourself.”*** This is the second most important commandment God gave to His people. This second commandment is built on the principle that we should love and take care of ourselves before loving others. We often ignore or disregard the last word “yourself” or undervalue it. Nevertheless, the key principle in our text emphasizes that loving ourselves is the key to loving others.

Self-care is a key biblical principle. Self-care is about taking care of your physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being. 3 John 1:2 says, ***"Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers."*** ***(NKJV)*** We are valuable and precious being to God. Therefore, it is important that we exercise regularly, eat healthy, and avoid things that may be physically or spiritually harmful to us. We are also to guard our hearts because Proverbs 4:23 says ***“Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.” (NIV)*** This text suggests, we must guard, nourish, and care for our heart since in a man’s heart exists who we truly are. In other words, God cares deeply about how we treat ourselves and how we represent Him to the world.

**Mindfulness: Being Present with God**

In a world of upheaval and uncertainty, we know that only God can give us the peace and hope that allows us to deal with the troubles we face every day. Mindfulness is the practice of being fully present in the moment, aware of God’s presence and focus on His promises daily. Mindfulness teaches us to acknowledge our challenges and seek God to help us through them for only God can supply our every need. Philippians 4:19 ***“And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.” (NIV)*** In addition, mindfulness helps us to defuse our anxious thoughts and see things from the lens of Christ. Philippians 4:6-7 says **“*Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”*** It is that peace that helps us to control our emotions and thoughts when dealing with adversity.

**Positive Relationship: Building a Circle of Trust**

Strong, healthy, positive relationships are essential to building up our resilience. Faith-filled connections provide support, accountability and encouragement during difficult times. As Proverbs 27:17 says, ***"As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another."(NIV)*** Surrounding yourself with people who are supportive and encouraging will help you stay motivated, grow, and maintain your faith in difficult times. Hebrews 10:24-25 reiterates this, urging us to ***"Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. 25And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another...”***

To build a circle of trust, we must build up our spirit of discernment. Some relationships are not good for our spiritual growth. Jesus taught us about setting healthy boundaries. Matthew 5:37 says, ***"But let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No.’ For whatever is more than these is from the evil one."(NKJV)*** This text reminds us to protect our emotional well-being and spiritual wellbeing by setting limits and avoid overcommitting ourselves.

Relationships can strengthen or weaken your resilience. When building a circle of trust, you must be deliberate about who you invite into your inner circle. This will empower you to overcome adversity in grace and courage. Choose friends who will empower you and encourage you on your faith journey, making you accountable and bring life to your situation. You will be better equipped to overcome your challenges and setbacks as you create a circle of trusted relationships based on love, respect and shared values. Resilience is a team effort and God will place the right people to help you navigate through whatever season you are in.

**Reflection/Recap**

* Recognizing your strengths and God-given identity provides a solid foundation for growth.
* Self-care honors God and is essential for maintaining the strength needed for resilience
* Mindfulness helps center your thoughts on God, reducing anxiety and increasing clarity.
* Positive relationships provide a strong support system that helps you endure adversity.

**Call to Action**

1. Build up your resilience muscle: Develop your resilience blueprint that includes a routine of self-awareness, self-care, meditation and a support team.

**Chapter 7: Resilient Living**

***“This is my command—be strong and courageous!  
Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the Lord   
your God is with you wherever you go.” – Joshua 1:9***

According to the American Psychological Association (APA), resilient living refers to the process and the outcome of successfully adapting to difficult circumstances and situations. (APA dictionary of psychology, 2024.) Resilient living is the ability to anticipate, prepare and effectively respond to challenging situations or setbacks that occur in your life. It is your ability to adapt to your current environmental or personal situation. Essentially, it is living a life where you can continue to move forward or “bounce back” from despite of what is happening in your life currently. It is about thriving and not just surviving.

Resilient living does not mean that we will be absent from any trials or tribulations, but it is about our ability to live purposefully despite any challenge. Living a resilient life is about transformational changes that we must implement in order to face life challenges, pain and setbacks. Living a resilient life refers to the process and the outcome of successfully adapting to the mental, emotional, and behavior adjustments that we must make as it relates to our intrinsic and extrinsic values and demands. Simply, it’s how we engage in a world where chaos, insecurities, and uncertainty is at an all-time high.

Dealing with life issues has a way of making us feel discouraged and trapped in what appears to be a cycle of sorrow, as if we are unable to move forward in life. However, Jesus said in John 10:10 ***“The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly”***. God calls us to live an abundant life, even when times are hard. Thriving in the midst of adversity means embracing the idea that we don’t have to wait for our lives to be great and perfect or our challenges or circumstances to be completely resolve in order to live a meaningful life. Instead, we learn to seek purpose, joy, wisdom and maturity even in the midst of adversity.

**Be Strong and Courageous**

In 2007, I was at the height of my career and my ministry. I had achieved recognition, status, and respect as a game changer and a trusted Elder at my church. My future was bright, and my path to success and happiness was clearly laid out before me. But it all came crashing down one ordinary morning when I found myself hospitalized because of an unexpected illness. Suddenly, my life was irrevocably changed forever.

It was 6 a.m. on a gloomy day, when three doctors entered my hospital room. One of them, Dr Peter Hart, introduced himself as the head of the Nephrology department at Cook County Hospital. His expression was calm, but serious as he began to ask me a series of questions about my overall health and my condition. Lying in that hospital bed, I tried to focus and concentrate on his words, but my emotions were a storm of fear and uncertainty. Finally, I raised my hand, signaling him to pause and stop. A moment passed before I began to speak, “Can you explain everything that you just say like I am a two-year-old?” I asked, “What are you really trying to say to me? Dr. Hart took a deep breath and said, “You have been diagnosed with an autoimmune disease called Lupus Nephritis, and as a result, your kidneys are failing.” His words hit me like a freight train. My heart was shattered. Just days before, I had been a thriving 41-year-old woman full of life and purpose. Now, I did not even know if I was going to live long enough to see my daughters grow up or even graduate from college. I could not imagine what my life would look like. The independence, success, and everything I had finally achieved was slipping away.

The support that I received from my family and friends who rallied around me was very comforting, but nothing could have prepared me for what came next. Back home, as I lay in the bed recovering, I glanced over at my husband lying beside me. His back was turned, as it often was when he appeared to be sleeping. I needed my prescription to be picked up from the store, so I asked him for his car keys so that one of our daughters could go and pick them up. He hesitated, his movements were slow and strained. I noticed the tension in his body, and before I could ask again, he finally turned to me as said, “I want a divorce.” Those four words cut deep down to my core. It shattered my heart into broken pieces. He was the man that I had chosen to build a life with. He was the one that I had chosen to grow old with and at a time when I needed him the most, he was leaving me. He was leaving me to face an uncertain future as a woman with two daughters, no job and no idea how I was going to survive or even make it. Nevertheless, that pain became the turning point in my life. As I lay broken and overwhelmed, I realized I had a choice to make: to give up or to fight for my life. I chose to fight. It was the moment when I decided to surrender everything over to God to build up my faith and trust in Him to see me through my storm.

Living with end-stage renal disease has not been easy. Three days a week, for four hours at a time, I undergo dialysis to survive. After each treatment, I spend hours regaining just enough strength to handle the rest of the day. Every session is a reminder of how fragile life is, but also how grateful I am to be alive. One morning during my personal devotion time, I opened my bible to Joshua 1:8-9 and the words seemed to leap off the page: “***Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. 9Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.”*** The phrase “Be strong and courageous” gripped my heart. I read it over and over again. I knew at that moment that God was addressing my two main fears: The fear of dying and the fear of the unknown. That scripture became my anchor. Every dialysis session, every setback, every moment of doubt, I reminded myself to be strong and courageous. I chose to live and not die. I chose to believe that my story wasn’t over, that God could use even my hurt and pain for His glory.

**Promise over Adversity**

Today, my journey continues. For over 15 years, I’ve lived with Lupus and kidney failure and endured countless dialysis sessions and have faced health challenges, yet here I am—alive and thriving. There are hard days, but there is also hope. I’ve learned that courage isn’t the absence of fear—it’s trusting God and believing in His promises enough to take the next step, even when the future feels uncertain. The success to resilient living as Christians lies in trusting God’s promises and walking in obedience to His Word. Proverbs 3:5-6 says, *“****Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to Him, and He will make your paths straight.”*** These words offer both comfort and challenges. As believers in Jesus Christ, we know that trials and tribulations is part of the process by which God uses to help us grow, be strong, and become mature. Yet, even with this understanding, going through adversity is never easy. Trusting God means surrendering control, even when the path ahead seems unclear or impossible. It means trusting and believing that God’s purpose and promises will unfold in His time and His way, not ours.

As Christians, we know trials and tribulations are not accidental. They are instruments of God that He use to shape us, strengthen us, and guide us to help us grow deeper in our faith. The struggle to live with Lupus and kidney failure has been one of my most difficult challenges, however, I am reminded daily it is important for me to lean not to my own understanding but on the unwavering promises of God.

2 Corinthians 12:10 says “***That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”*** This verse teaches me to look at my struggles differently, to see them not in defeat but in God’s grace. It reminded me that God’s grace is not only the balm that heals me, but it is the power and strength that holds me up during difficult times. When I feel too weak to carry on, it is His grace that lifts me, sustains me and empowers me to move forward and persevere.

In every trial I face, the reason why I am capable of being strong and courageous during the hard times is that God’s grace makes me strong. His presence in my life does not mean He is taking away the problem but seeing me through the problem. It is through our vulnerabilities that His power shines, equipping us to keep going even when we feel we cannot go on.

Even Jesus had prepared His disciples for the realities of life when He told them: ***“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)*** These words weren’t just for the disciples, but they were for us today. Jesus did hide the reality of life’s challenges, but He did promise us a peace that comes not from our own abilities, but from the victory He won through His death on the cross. The phrase“take heart” invites us to find courage and hope, not in ourselves but in Christ. His suffering, death, and resurrection have secured for us a hope and a future that far outweigh any pain we may face in this world. Where there was once death, Jesus brings us life. Where there was once condemnation, He has given us grace and peace.

Living with a chronic illness has taught me to rely on God promises and His truth for it will give me the strength to weather every trial that come my way. It is through His promises that we cultivate a life of resilience. This comes through daily prayer, meditating on God’s Word, and choosing to focus on His promises instead of my problems. When we anchor ourselves in the promises of God, His peace transcends our circumstances, His courage overcomes our fears, and His strength transforms our weaknesses into testimonies of His faithfulness and power. This is the promise over adversity, a promise I cling to every single day.

**Trusting God in Your Wilderness experience**

A wilderness experience is a time in a believer’s life where we might face some unhappiness, some hardships, and/or loneliness. It is a season when things are in an upheaval in our lives and the good times seem not to exist. It is a time of spiritual, mental and financial attacks that are increased and intensified. But more often than not, it is a time where in order to go to the next level in life, God test us and uses our wilderness experience to build up our faith and refine our character. Going through a wilderness experience, builds us up where we place more confidence not in your own ability but in God’s sufficiency. We cannot take the credit but acknowledge and rely on God for everything He has done for us yet while going through it.

There are many cases of wilderness experiences mentioned in the Bible. First case: the story of the children of Israel. God used Moses to rescue His people from slavery in Egypt and lead them to praise Him in the wilderness. Along the way, they had a chance to see miraculous power of God such as the opening of the Red Sea, where God rescued them from Pharaoh’s army and made them cross on dry land. But even with all of this amazing demonstration of His power and faithfulness, because they disobeyed God causing them to be judged.  As a result of their continual disobedience and defiance, they spent 40 years wandering in the desert, instead of entering the Promised Land because of their lack of trust and faith in God. As I reflect on this story, I think back as to how many times have, I caused myself to missed out on receiving my healing in my health and my finances for lack of trust and faith in God.

Second case: Jesus’ wilderness experience. Jesus had gone through a wilderness too. He was baptized and after that we find: ***"Then the Spirit sent him out into the wilderness, and he was in the wilderness forty days, temptation by Satan."*** ***(Mark 1:12-13, NIV)***. In our text, we are taught four important truths from Jesus’ time in the wilderness:

* + - 1. We will be tested by the enemy.
      2. God allows wilderness experiences to test our faith and grow us up.
      3. We can trust God to deliver us. For He promised in His word to never leave us or forsake us.
      4. God’s word is our offensive weapon to use against the enemy. The truth will give us victory.

Third case: After wandering in the wilderness for forty years, following the death of Moses, Joshua was chosen by God to lead the children of Isreal into the land of milk and honey that was promise made by God to his forefathers many years ago. The weight of this assignment was great, and Joshua was charged by God to lead His people across the River Jordan to take possess of the land. God never told Joshua that the assignment was going to be easy. He never said that Joshua and the children of Isreal was not going to face any more challenges or issues, but He told Joshua that if he obeys His commandments that exist in the word of God, then He will prosper and have great success. He will prosper in all that he does. ***(Joshua 1:8, NKJV)***  God gave him a guarantee and told him to be strong and courageous and don’t be discourage for He will be with him every step of the way.

The Wilderness experience can be displayed in two forms: As a judgement for our disobedience or as a test to build up our resilience. The wilderness experience forces us to trust God and wait on Him. It is in an easy place to be in but as we pursue after God and His righteousness, we will find joy and peace even in the midst of storm. Only through our wilderness experience can we build up our resilience muscle where we rely not on our strength but God’s truths and abilities. For example, in my own wilderness experience, I’ve learned that it’s okay to dream of living a healthy and prosperous life, but I also realized that it’s God alone who can make it happen. We are lost without His help and guidance and without the trust to carry out His will for our lives, the challenges of life will overwhelm us. For **Acts 17:28** reminds us, ***“For in Him we live and move and have our being.”*** ***(NIV)*** We have the power by the grace of God to continue to live a life of resilience when things do not go our way. So, if you are currently in a wilderness season, remember this: God is with you and He is working things out on your behalf. Get ready for your future and do not doubt God for His grace is sufficient, and His promises never fail.

**Reflection/Recap:**

* Resilience is about thriving, not just surviving.
* Wilderness experiences refine and prepare us.
* God’s promises are the foundation of resilient living.
* Courage isn’t the absence of fear but faith in action.

**Call to Action:**

1. **Take a Step of Faith:** Identify one area in your life where fear or uncertainty has held you back. Take one actionable step to trust God to guide and sustain you through it.

**Chapter 8: Turning trials into triumph**

***“No weapon formed against you shall prosper...”  
 – Isaiah 54:17 (NKJV)***

**From lemons to lemonade**

There is a quote that we say, “When life hands you lemon, just make lemonade.” Simply, when difficulties come your way, you don’t throw in the towel, you shake off the dusk and get back up and keep it moving. That is the attitude that I have adopted over the years when faced with pain and setbacks that knock me off my feet. People ask me how do I react when faced with a difficult trial in my life? I simply respond by saying two words and that is “But God”.

It is easy to celebrate life when things are going well. You have money in the bank, bills are paid, your family is happy, and your health is great. It is easy to praise the Lord when things appear to be going exactly in the way you planned, but what happens when it doesn’t? What do you do when the good life you were living was suddenly hit with a life-altering event such as a divorce, death of a loved one, or a major financial loss? What do you do when your faith is tested beyond your limits? James 1:2 says, ***“count it all joy when you go through divers of trials or temptations... for out of it comes perseverance.”*** Perseverance means doing something despite difficulties. When pain or setbacks come your way, that is the moment where your faith is no longer an option, but an absolute necessity if you are going to live your life victoriously.

I can honestly tell you that it is through my pain and setbacks that my faith in God becomes stronger the most. For it is in those times that I am able to see how God operates in my life faster when I place my trust in Him. Throughout my journey of living with Lupus and Kidney disease, I wanted to throw in the towel many times for often the pain both physically and mentally was too hard to bear. Dealing with the emotion of feeling helpless and hopeless daily was enough for me to give up on myself to recover, my family, but mostly faith in God. For I could not believe that God would allow so many negative things to happen all at once. From having some money to no money, from little debt to major debt. Nothing that I did bring me the joy or the peace that the bible says that I could have if I simply have the faith to believe in God. So, the question that I begin to ask myself each day was “Now What?”

Going through a period of touch times is nothing strange for Christians. John 16:33 says ***“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.”*** Turning trials into triumph requires us to understand it is usually through difficult times in our lives where we gain the strength and maturity to endure the hardship we face and pursue after something greater and that greater is “wisdom.” Wisdom is often developed when we learn from our experiences and apply them into our lives. Wisdom orders our steps in the direction that will help us to become whole and complete, lacking nothing.

Wisdom helps us to finish strong in touch times and deal with our life challenges. For example, I reflect on the time following my divorce, when I faced a financial hardship that forced me to lose everything that I had achieved. I lost my house, my cars, my relationships, and my social status. For the first time in my life, I was lost and homeless. It was the moment or the period of time in my life when I felt abandoned all over again. My relationship with God was shaky and my faith was unstable. Philippians 1:6 says, ***“being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.”*** Although my pain and setback were difficult and hard to endure, knowing that God has a plan and purpose for my life gave me the strength and endurance to keep going. The key point to remember is that no matter what difficult challenges we go through in our lives we serve a God who cause us to triumph in our adversity.

**Embracing the Pruning Process**

When I bought my first home in 2000, I was gifted to have a rose bush in my front lawn area that would grow beautiful roses in the late Spring/Summer. I was determined to make sure that my rose bush would remain beautiful all throughout the season every year. Instead of hiring a gardener, I decided to prune my rose bush myself. When the season came for the roses to begin to bloom, they did not. Instantly, I thought I had destroyed my rose bush due to my lack of experience, however, after consulting someone about it, I learned that I had not trimmed all of the dead leaves and branches which stopped my roses from not blooming in season. Once I pruned and reshaped my rose bush, my roses began to bud and blossom into beautiful roses.

John 15:2 says ***“He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes[***[***a***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%2015&version=NIV#fen-NIV-26702a)***] so that it will be even more fruitful.”***  According to our text, for us to triumph in all areas of our lives, it is important to go through God’s pruning process. His pruning process removes all the dead things in our lives that is hindering us from growing and maturing in our faith. Life is not always easy. Even when we face life challenges and struggles, God reminds us to be strong and courageous even when we fall to our lowest point. 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.”*** God tells us when face difficulties in our lives, we will not be alone, He will be there for us when to help us through it. It is in our weakness that God is made strong. He is our strength, and we can rejoice that He is a very present help in a time of trouble.

On January 4, 2023, I had a kidney biopsy that resulted in me finding out that my kidney transplant is going through rejection. For the next 5 weeks, I went through a series of medical treatments that was designed to help save my transplanted Kidney. In the air of transparency, I can say it was a rough ride. On the following Monday, I was diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes on top of everything else medically that I am going through.

When I think of God’s pruning process, He was allowing me to go through all of this in my life for there is a purpose for me to do. After everything I have gone through thus far, I know that my time is not over yet. I am here to encourage others to remain resilient. There is a quote that I read that says “It is your reaction to adversity, not adversity itself that determines how your life’s story will develop” by Dieter F. Uchtdorf.

In our new season, we are going to go through many trials and tribulations, but we must be willing to remain resilient to accomplish all that God has originally designed for us. Psalm 139:16 says, ***“Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.”*** Everything that I am going to become was already written even before I was formed in my mother’s belly. I am not sure what tomorrow is going to bring for me, but what I do know is what the scripture says in Philippians 3:12-14 ***“Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”*** So, it is time for us to remain resilient and move forward towards our next, now!

**All things working for my good**

When we face difficulties in life, we must look at the big picture. Philippians 4:11 says ***“Not that I was ever in need, for I have learned how to be content with whatever I have.”***  In our text, Apostle Paul teaches us to learn to be content in whatever state that we are in. Being content means being satisfied and happy with your current situation in life without desiring more. Contentment brings a sense of peace in the midst of trouble. It allows you to have confidence in God suggesting that if the same God did it before He can do it again. The assurance that if God brought you through in the past that same God will carry you through in the present.

Roman 8:28 says ***“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.”*** Apostle Paul explains that God’s goodness and our confidence that His plan will work out as He sees fit. Since His plan is always good, Christians can take confidence that, no matter our circumstances or environments, God is active and will conclude things according to His good and wise design. God’s plan will not be thwarted. Throughout his life, Joseph trusted God no matter his good or bad circumstances. Joseph experienced plenty of bad things: kidnapping, slavery, false accusations, wrongful imprisonment, rejection, and famine. But in the end God brought things to a wonderful, life-affirming conclusion. God blessed Joseph’s entire family through those painful circumstances and through Joseph’s faith. God allows for us to go through hard times to help us recognize our need for Him. Our pain and setback teach us that God is faithful and His plans for us will accomplish what He has designed for them to fulfill.

**Reflection/Recap**

* Trials are an opportunity for growth.
* The pruning process is necessary to bring forth good fruit.
* Contentment brings peace in Adversity
* God uses all things for our good.

**Call to Action**

1. Each day, write down three things you are grateful for, even in your current season. Focus on finding peace and satisfaction in God’s provision.

**Changing the Game**

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

***“And my God will meet all your needs according   
to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus”  
 – Philippians 4:19 (NIV)***

One area that is impacted when faced with adversity is our finances. For most people, financial issues bring anxiety, frustration, and even shame. The way we tend to spend our money, balance our bank accounts, try to stretch every dollar and think about how we are going to afford our basic needs. The key point is that God does not intend for us to live a life of lack or poverty. John 10:10 ***“The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.”*** In our text, Jesus made it clear that we are live our lives to the fullest and not a life of scarcity. God did not give us a life where we are just surviving, but He calls for us thrive. He created us to be stewards on the earth, to have dominion and to prosper. He created us to become generous givers and obedient servants who have faith in Him and His ability to supply everything that we need. In this chapter, I will discuss a few key principles of how we can transform from a scarcity mindset to an abundance mindset. We were not created to live in financial fear but to live a lifestyle rooted in financial faith, freedom, and peace.

**Wealth Mindset**

When I became divorced, I struggled financially. For living with a chronic illness not only impacted every area of my life but the main area that was impacted the most was my finances. Recovering from a financial loss was a great task. It is easy to develop a scarcity mindset when financial challenges are at an all-time high. A scarcity mindset focuses on what we lack rather than trusting in the abundance and provision that God originally designed for us. A scarcity mindset often develops from a place of fear. A fear that we won’t have enough to meet our basic needs, a fear of losing control, or fear of failing to provide for family or our loved ones. This mindset caused me to experience money anxiety which had a significant impact on my overall mental and physical health. It was a mindset that was a major roadblock to achieving my goals in life. I began to focus on what I did not have rather than what I do have as a child of God.

3 John 1:2 says “***Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers.”*** This text reveals that it was part of God’s original plain for mankind to live a healthy and prosperous life in every area of their life. Living a life focused on lack is not the abundant life that Jesus came and died for. When we focus on our ability, we will always be limited and experience lack, but when we focus on the Kingdom and God’s abilities, we will have all that we need to thrive and not just survive. Matthew 6:33 tells us to ***“Seek first the Kingdom of God an all of its righteousness and all these things will be added.”*** ***(NKJV)*** The “these things” are the necessities that we need to live that abundant lifestyle that was promised to us by God if we obey His commandments. *(****Deuteronomy 28:1-14****)*

When we embrace God’s provision for our lives, we change our focus from a mindset of lack to a mindset of abundance and wealth. We begin to focus on God’s endless resources that He provides for we recognize that all things both in heaven and on earth belongs to Him. Psalm 24:1 says, ***“The earth is the Lord’s, and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell therein.”*** Everything belongs to God. Nothing that exists belongs to mankind. It is God who gives us the ability to obtain wealth and maintain it. When we are in an abundance and wealth mindset, we know that God has the everything we need. We no longer fear that we will run out of our finances, but instead we believe that God will give us everything that we need to live an abundant life.

**Financial Stewardship**

Once we confront our financial fears and begin to focus our minds on an abundant mindset, we develop an understanding that everything we have ultimately belongs to God and is a gift from God. For God entrusted us to exercise wise stewardship over His resources. Stewardship simply means managing or taking care of something or someone else’s property. According to the bible, stewardship is the practice of using God’s resources such as time, talents, or treasures to serve God and His people. It is based on the principal that God owns everything and that his chosen people are managers of His creation.

When we think about financial stewardship, we are focusing on the principal of how we handle our money and possession as stewards over the gifts that God has given unto us to handle. God will not place on us more than we can handle. A key point related to financial stewardship is the aspect of becoming a generous giver. 2 Corinthians 9:7 says ***“So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of [***[***f***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2%20Corinthians%209&version=NKJV#fen-NKJV-28964f)***]necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.”*** The bible encourages us to become cheerful givers for as we give, He gives back unto us generously. Making financial choices that align with God priority and choices, opens doors for God blessings to come into our lives in a way that exceed our very own expectations.

**Kingdom Giving**

As financial stewards, we manage our finances with faith and integrity. It involves practicing honesty, diligence and wise decision making over all our financial matters. It requires that we put God first. How we do it is through the principle of tithes and offering. Once we understand financial stewardship, we recognize that giving is a key point of God’s money system.

Kingdom giving is much more than giving to the church or making donations to charity. It is an act of faith that opens doors for God’s bountiful blessings to be pour out over our lives. Malachi 3:10 ***“Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, And try Me now in this,” Says the Lord of hosts, “If I will not open for you the windows of heaven And pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it.”*** In our text, kingdom giving refers to tithes and offering and generous giving towards those who are in need. God gave a commandment by saying two words “test me”. When we test God, He is giving us the permission to put Him on the spot to deliver. By giving to other, God has a promise that He must fulfilled from our giving. That promise is as we give, He gives back unto us. But His giving is not a small amount. It is a blessing where we will not even have room to receive it all or store it all.

Giving position us for overflow. Luke 6:38 ***says “Give, and you will receive. Your gift will return to you in full pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, running over, and poured into your lap. The amount you give will determine the amount you get back.”*** Our text provides us with God’s equation of abundance when you give. You make room for God to multiply what you gave ten-fold. Giving is a faith move. Not like when you take a risk in starting a business or any other money getting opportunities like gambling at a casino. When we give according to God’s Kingdom giving system, every seed we sow activate God’s divine system of wealth to become activated and the blessing we receive from God far supersede what we gave. When you give, you are making a faith statement. That statement is that you trust God to replenish everything that you gave.

**Reflect/Recap**

1. **A wealth mindset is essential for abundance.** Renew your mind daily, declare God’s promises, and expect breakthrough.
2. **Stewardship is the first step to financial freedom.** You are a manager, not an owner. When you manage well, God gives you more.
3. **Kingdom giving activates the blessings of God.** Tithing and generosity are acts of faith that position you for increase.

**Call to Action**

1. **Write 5 Wealth Affirmations:** Create 5 financial affirmations and declare them every day for 31 days. Here are a few examples:
   * *"God supplies all my needs according to His riches in glory."*
   * *"I am a faithful steward, and God trusts me with more."*

**Chapter 10: Empowered for Purpose**

***For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus  
 for good works, which God prepared beforehand   
that we should walk in them. – Ephesians 2:10***

We were uniquely created by God and equipped for a special purpose. Every failure, hurt and trial you’ve had is not an accident but a road to success towards fulfilling your Kingdom assignment and Kingdom purpose. The bible tells us in Ephesians 2:10 says ***"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”***  We were created to serve and prepare the kingdom for the coming king. Life challenges can throw us sideways, cut off, and confuse us as to what is our life purpose here on earth. We start questioning whether God will still use us with all our mess ups and setbacks. But the truth is that our failures are preparation for our comeback which is God’s strategy to perfect us and make us perfect for His purposes. Your setbacks do not define you; they shape you; they grow you and teaches you. We were made specifically for a specific reason and purpose. The important thing to remember is that only you can fulfill the assignment. All the mistakes, the hurts and the hardships you’ve endured are not mistakes but steps on the path to completing your given task.

**Learning to Trust Again**

When you put your faith in God, it does not mean that you are denying your life challenges are not real and difficult. You aren’t just faking it and telling yourself things are OK. Rather, you are submitting your suffering to Him and then letting Him build up your faith and confidence in His faithfulness to bring you through it. Psalm 34:18 tells us ***"The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit."(NIV)*** It’s ok to tell God that you have doubts and worries. He wants you to dump your heart on Him, for he knows what he can do.

When your life challenges get too much, consider how God has been faithful before. I Think back and remember that times when I had a negative bank account and no food to eat. The money that I would receive would not come for a while, God through His grace and mercy by way of the Food pantry near my home, provided everything that I needed for over a month. The images of a full refrigerator rather than an empty one helped me to remember that His name is Jehovah Jireh which means the Lord provides. The Lord will forever watch over His people. He never changes and He never will.

Lamentations 3:22-23 says, ***"Because of the Lord’s great love we are not consumed, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness."***  When we consider these truths, trust is restored, and we stop looking at the uncertainty of our situations and begin looking at the stability of his promises. In 2004, when I lost everything unexpectedly, I doubted God’s goodness, but when I began to journal my prayers and shared my true heart with God, I could feel and see His fingerprints on my life. He comforted me through friends, made provision for me, and helped me through each day. Although His process did not remove my hurt or pain, it drew me closer to Him through my worship and prayers. Each time, I review my journal, I have a written testimony on how God’s grace and His goodness helped me endure it all. So, when trials and tribulations come my way, I go back to my journal and review the list of promises that God has fulfilled in my life, symbolizing that God is omnipresent and He is a truly a living God that watches over His people daily.

**Rebuilding Stronger Relationships**

Pain can segregate us, and we become cut off from other people. A hurt relationship is painful and it can dissolve relationships. Rebuilding them takes strength, humility and focus. The relationships we have are not created in a vacuum — they take work and grace.  
God designed us to commune with one another and not become an island or isolate ourselves. Relationship with other like-minded Christians helps us to heal and thrive. They provide companionship and help us to grow spiritually. Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 reminds us, ***"Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up."*** If either of them falls, one lifts the other. These kinds of relationships are built on trust, integrity and values. They help us grow and they hold us accountable one to another. They call us back to God’s love when life seems too much and too hard. Proverbs 27:17 says, ***“As the iron sharpens the iron, so the man sharpens the man.” (NIV)***

Forgiveness is a necessity if your pain or setback has cost you faithful friends. Forgiveness doesn’t necessarily mean that the relationship will be restored to where it was previously, but forgiveness does open the door for restoration and healing. Colossians 3:13 encourages us, ***"Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you."(NIV)*** Forgiveness is a decision to let go of resentment and anger even when the other person doesn’t ask. Because the Lord has forgiven you for your trespasses, so should you forgive others who trespass against you. ***(Matthew 6:15, NKJV)***

When you want to make new relationships and friendships, ask God to teach you to regain trust in others and make new, Christ-centered connections. Not all relationships are or should be totally reconnected. Defending yourself by setting limits shields your soul and keeps your heart pure. Proverbs 4:23 says, ***"Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it."*** For healthy relationships honors God and offers mutual respect.

**Exercising Discipline**

Being the person God has called you to be requires discipline. Discipline is the bridge between where you are now and where God will bring you too. It’s the willingness, even when it’s challenging, to be in the same mind, and on the same page as God’s purpose and plan for you. Without discipline, not even the most meaningful goal will be achieved. Just like an athlete who is training for a competition, you need to work on your mind, body and spirit to stay strong and focused.

Discipline just doesn’t happen spontaneously. It starts with deciding to be intentional. Purposeful discipline means setting priorities that is in tune with God’s will and making intentional decisions based on your values and goals. Purposeful discipline starts with saying “no” to what gets you pulled away from God’s will, and "yes" to what gets you moving forward.  
Discipline can be hard now but it’s what God employs to groom you and rewire you for greater things. Discipline is not just for fun, but it will also make you trust Him more, have more relationships, and be better prepared to live out your purpose.

**Discover Your Uniqueness**

Have you ever stopped and thought how amazingly different you are? From your unique fingerprints or the unique path that you design for your life, there is nobody else who is like you. No two people act the same and no one can copy your style. Why? God made you in His image and with special talents and abilities that only you can fulfill for you have a special place in His plan and His Kingdom. Accepting who you are allows you to walk in your purpose fearlessly and joyfully. Psalm 139:14 says, ***"I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well." (NIV)***Your gifts and talents are not just for you, but they are for others and for worshiping God. The gifts that God has assigned is different for every one of us. Romans 12:6 says, ***"by grace you have made us".*** When you find and unleash your gifts, you can touch the lives of people in a way that only you can.

In a world that boxes individuals together based on culture and color of their skin, finding who you are is a process of finding who you were created to be based on God’s designed of you. He has already given you a particular set of gifts, skills, and experiences to prepare you for a work only you can do. Your differences do not make you weird or strange, with God’s you are a royal, chosen vessel fit to be used by God for a unique and specific assignment. So many people call me radical for I am outgoing and loud. It took years for me to understand that the radicalness God has given me allowed me to enter certain local area communities with no fear where others might not be so willing to go. Once, I accepted how God created me, not only did it create a holy boldness on the inside of me, but I was free from judgment and condemnation. ***(Romans 8:1, NKJV)***

When you accept your diversity, you not only exalt God, but you open the door to living courageously and authentically. 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."*** You are different because you are a child of God. You are not the same nor do you act the same way as you did before. Instead, you are who God saved you and called you to be and the assignment that God has for you to complete was only designed for you. You have been gifted by God with certain abilities and abilities to serve others and to bring his Kingdom forward. These are not by accident but deliberate and designed around your calling. Romans 12:6 states ***"We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us."*** When you think about the things that you naturally do or the things that you enjoy doing. They are usually signals of your style. It is important not to compare yourself to other people for each person is created differently.

Even your problems can be part of what makes you. You can help God use what’s been difficult for you to motivate others. Sometimes God uses our adversity to serve as a map and model for others to have hope and build resilience. Your imperfections and how you handle them can bring comfort to others when they too are faced with life a challenge like the one you faced. It is important to walk humbly in the shoes that God has designed for you and not for someone else for their life path can lead you down a path where the burdens they are assigned to carry, you are unable to carry. It is time to be authentically you!

**Reflect/Recap**

* Trusting God again is the first step toward embracing His purpose for your life.
* Faith-filled friendships and healthy relationships are essential for resilience and growth.
* Discipline is the daily commitment to align your actions with God’s purpose.
* Pain refines you for purpose; it does not define you
* Your uniqueness is a divine design, crafted by God to reflect His creativity and purpose.

**Call to Action**

1. **Activate Your Gifts:** Identify one way to use your unique gifts this week to serve someone else or honor God.
2. **Develop a Habit Tracker:** Write down 2-3 daily habits that align with your goal and track your progress each day. Celebrate small victories along the way.

**Reference**

Adapted from APA dictionary of Psychology. [APA Dictionary of Psychology](https://dictionary.apa.org/).