

# **RESILIENCE in life and ministry**



Finding strength in God

Tony Horsfall

# Resilience – what is it?



- The ability of a material to return to its original state after it has been bent, compressed or stretched.
- From the Latin 'resilio' = to spring back

# Definitions

‘Resilience is that ineffable quality that allows some people to be knocked down by life and come back stronger than ever. Rather than letting failure overcome them and drain their resolve, they find a way to rise from the ashes.

Psychologists have identified some of the factors that make someone resilient, among them a positive attitude, optimism, the ability to regulate emotions, and the ability to see failure as a form of helpful feedback. Even after misfortune, resilient people are blessed with such an outlook that they are able to change course and soldier on.’

Psychology Today

# Definitions

‘Resilience is having strength to fulfil the call God has given us, even when it will be painful and difficult.

Resilience is staying fixed on a higher purpose, motivated by love of God, our neighbour, and the world, and supported by friends.’

Karen Carr

# Five major strands in resilience

1. The ability to **bounce back**
2. The ability to **stand firm**
3. The ability to **recover well**
4. The ability to **keep going**
5. The ability to **adapt successfully**

# Where does resilience come from?

- (a) We are born with it
- (b) A characteristic that is learned as we face adversity
- (c) An impartation of divine strength

# Spiritual resilience

- *Hupomone (Greek) = endurance, perseverance, patience, spiritual staying power, 'constancy under pressure' (Barclay)*
- Spiritual resilience can be described as the capacity, when faced with adversity, to cope using religious resources. Justine Allain-Chapman
- We can be encouraged that a lot of what is recommended for building resilience for stressful lives and work places is already part of what most Christians will do daily anyway. The challenge is to do them more. Kirsten Birkett

# Jesus our Example Hebrews 12:1-2



‘Therefore . . . let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and sat down at the right hand of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart (Hebrews 12:1-3).’



# Resilience in life and ministry

<b>Life</b>	<b>Ministry</b>

# Resilience in life and ministry

<b>Life</b>	<b>Ministry</b>
Suffering, adversity, hardship, affliction	Resistance to the gospel
Loss and grief	Disappointments in the work
Stress and pressure	Oppression from the enemy
Relationship issues	Opposition, persecution
Anxiety, worry and fear	Failure (our own and that of others)
Ageing	Exhaustion
Doubts, questions, uncertainties	Spiritual dryness
Temptations, trials and testings	Temptations, trials and testings

<p><b>THEOLOGICAL</b> Resilient People have a sense of meaning and purpose, and a theology of suffering</p>	<p><b>PSYCHOLOGICAL</b> Resilient People have a clear sense of identity: Self-esteem, Self-efficacy, Self-understanding</p>	<p><b>RELATIONAL</b> Resilient People nurture supportive friendships and receive help from others</p>
<p><b>SPIRITUAL</b> Resilient People cultivate a vital relationship with God</p>	<p><b>MENTAL</b> Resilient People practice the renewal of their minds and manage their thought life</p>	<p><b>ORGANISATIONAL</b> Resilient People have a sense of belonging and of making a contribution (team)</p>
<p><b>PHYSICAL</b> Resilient People practice self-care and pay attention to their well-being</p>	<p><b>EMOTIONAL</b> Resilient People acknowledge and express their emotions but know how to manage them</p>	<p><b>INTELLECTUAL</b> Resilient People are committed to life-long learning and to developing new skills</p>

# Resilient Bible characters

- JOSEPH - finding a sense of meaning through the providence of God (Romans 8:28, Gen 45:5-8 and 50:20)
- NEHEMIAH - standing firm because he was called by God (Neh 2:12)
- DAVID - finding strength in God through his devotional life (1Sam 30)

# Resilient Bible characters

- PETER - starting again after his failure (John 20:15-19)
- PAUL - finishing the race (2Timothy 4:7)
- 'All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance.' Hebrews 11:13

# Bear in mind:



- We may be resilient in one area but not in another
- Resilience does not mean the absence of struggle, failure or defeat
- It can be learned, and it can be taught