



*For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:
a time to be born, and a time to die;
a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;
a time to kill, and a time to heal;
a time to break down, and a time to build up;
a time to weep, and a time to laugh;
a time to mourn, and a time to dance;
a time to throw away stones, and a time to gather stones together;
a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;
a time to seek, and a time to lose;
a time to keep, and a time to throw away;
a time to tear, and a time to sew;
a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
a time to love, and a time to hate;
a time for war, and a time for peace.
(Ecclesiastes 3:1-8)*

The writer of Ecclesiastes understood that life is not just a bed of roses. While joy and happiness certainly are part of human existence so, too, are adversity and suffering. Embracing the former is a welcome task, but accepting the latter knowing there will be much pain is something we have to work on continually.

Dr. Lucy Hone is a resilience expert and researcher who reminds us that adversity does not discriminate. Sooner or later it impacts all of us. She identifies three important characteristics of resilient people.

First, resilient people know that “stuff happens.” They understand that suffering is part of life, and no one is exempt. They don’t ask “why me?” but rather “why NOT me?” This approach makes it easier to search for meaning and growth in the midst of difficult life experiences.

Second, resilient people are really good at choosing where to direct their attention. They focus on things they CAN change, and jettison what they can’t. It’s true that

we are constantly bombarded by threats these days, but resilient people have worked out a way to see the silver lining. They choose life, not death. They find things for which to be grateful - every single day. Resilient people make an intentional, deliberate, ongoing effort to tune into the good in the world.

Third, resilient people are always asking themselves, “Is what I’m doing helpful or harmful to me?” By asking this simple question they regain some semblance of control over their decision-making. For example, in her own time of crisis Dr. Hone realized that she was spending too much time on social media so deleted her accounts. This gave her more time for productive reflection and socialization.

Dr. Hone makes clear that training ourselves to think and act in this way is not easy, but if one can intentionally work on these three exercises it really will help one become more durable and adaptable.

This week, I encourage you to carve out some time to reflect on how you might become a more resilient person, not only by using Dr. Hone’s research, but also reflecting on the focus scripture, knowing that God is present with us even and especially when there are challenges in our lives.

Pastor Chuck

Let us pray. Lord Christ, you came into the world as one of us, and suffered as we do. As we go through the trials of life, help us to realize that you are with us at all times and in all things; that we have no secrets from you; and that your living grace enfolds us for eternity. In the security of your embrace we pray. Amen.