

Displaying Resiliency in Ministry

REV. RYAN RALSTON

Recently, I was talking to someone who was encountering the greatest trial of their life. It is a trial of life-altering circumstances. Honestly, it is the kind of trial that some people never make it through. During a trial of this magnitude many people will stop serving God. I am not sure if it is because they blame God to some degree; they know God could have prevented the trial but didn't; or they were serving God for the blessings and weren't surrendered completely to His will. Whatever the reasoning, I have watched many people backslide during a season of trial or affliction. Or, if they do make it through the trial, they have lost their joy and become bitter towards life and people. Yet, other believers encounter the same afflictions and continue to serve God and grow in their faith. What makes the difference in people? Why is it the trial that causes certain people to quit on God only strengthens the resolve in others?

Why can some people "bounce back" after adversity, while others never regain their balance? *The ability to bounce back after adversity is defined as resiliency.* Resiliency is the ability to adapt to varied situations and *develop one's ability of perseverance during conflict* or setback (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013). Siebert defined resiliency as "a person's ability to absorb high levels of change, bounce back, and even excel at times of change" (Siebert, 2000, p.7).

Mark Searby, director of Doctor of Ministry Studies at Beeson Divinity School, studied the characteristics displayed by resilient pastors. In his work *The Resilient Pastor: Ten Principles for Developing Pastoral Resiliency* he writes his own working definition of resiliency is "the ability to overcome adversity and maintain effective living and leading while experiencing growth" (Searby, 2013, p.7). His research postulated a list of ten principles needed to develop resiliency in ministry.

As I have read extensively about resiliency,

it has led to three general conclusions about what it looks like in the individuals in which it is displayed. First, they have an acceptance of reality. They have an awareness of the situation. Second, they display a keen ability to adapt and remain hopeful. Third, they have an inestimable value for life, including suffering. One verse that I hold onto during adversity and frequently encourage others to stay connected to during affliction is Romans 8:28 which says, *"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."* I believe this verse teaches us how to "bounce back" from setbacks in life.

THE CERTAINTY OF THE PROMISE – "AND WE KNOW"

This verse begins very pointedly and assuredly. As this verse unfolds with a special promise for those who walk with God, we must never allow anything to cause us to fear, doubt, or not trust God wholeheartedly. Apostle Paul states five times in Romans that certain things "we know" as believers. God doesn't want us walking in unbelief or fear. God wants His people to KNOW the promises of God!

Adrian Rogers told the story about a farmer who had a big brush pile of debris that he was going to burn. He noticed a little bird had built a nest in that brush pile, so he destroyed the nest. When he came back days later, he found the bird rebuilding the nest. The farmer destroyed the nest again. But the bird built again, and again the farmer destroyed it. Finally, the little bird gave up. I can just imagine that little bird going home and saying to his family, "I just don't know why all our good plans of building a home are not working." Well, there was an unseen hand doing something the bird may have thought was bad, but was good.



THE COMPLETENESS OF THE PROMISE – "ALL THINGS WORK TOGETHER FOR GOOD"

Obviously, this verse does not say that all things are good. We live in a fallen world where sin is present and the devil is real. There is sickness, heartache, betrayal, and death. All things are not good. Notice what the verse says- "all things work together for good." There is a process whereby everything that happens in life can be used by God to bring about His glory in our life. This is the *scope of the process*. We can trust Him that everything that happens will be used by Him to bring His glory into our lives in a greater measure. What a comforting promise. Therefore, I don't have to be suspect of God's intention. I can rest assuredly in His peace that passes all understanding.

This verse also describes the *dynamic of the process*. Things "work together for good." As stated, not all things are good if we look at them individually. Yet, when we look at the overall picture of our lives we see God can weave together events that were unpleasant with other events in life to bring about something great. For instance, think about something many people use on a daily basis-table salt. It is comprised of chlorine

SEE 'MINISTRY' ON PAGE 4

MEET THE FACULTY AND STUDENTS AT HERITAGE SEMINARY



Faculty and Staff from Left to Right: Justin Fiocoprile, *Men's RA*, Dr. Ed Ralston, *Faculty*, Dr. Ryan Ralston, *President/Faculty*, Mr. Gregg Miles, *Academic Dean/Faculty*, Mrs. Delaine Barnes, *Faculty*, Mrs. Rachel Padgett, *Faculty*, Ms. Robin Holcombe, *Women's RA/Faculty*, Mrs. Bonnie Miles, *Faculty*, Mrs. Brina Davis, *Registrar/Secretary*



Students from Left to Right: Grant Ralston, *Junior*, Jared "JC" Burris, *Freshman*, Derek Blevins, *Freshman*, Landon Ralston, *Freshman*, Ashlan Floyd, *Freshman*, Kelsey Fiocoprile, *Sophomore*, Ashley Radcliffe, *Freshman*, Emily Burris, *Freshman*, Abigail Gentry, *Freshman*, Stormy Carroll, *Sophomore*, Vincent Ellis, *Freshman*, Luke Morgan, *Freshman*, Isaac Peyton, *Sophomore*, Aaron Asselin, *Sophomore*, Valerie Peyton, *Freshman* (not pictured)

TEACHER SPOTLIGHT: DELAINE BARNES

Date of Birth: January 17
Hobbie: Gardening
Food: Southern Cooking/Fried Chicken
Season: Spring
Music: Gospel/Gold City
Author: Patricia Polacco (children's book author)
Color: Yellow



Teaching at Heritage has been one of the most profound experiences of my teaching career. I retired from the Chatham County Public School System in 2015 after having served many years and feeling that I had been used of God to be a light and make a difference in many lives. I, in no way, felt like retiring would mean the end of my teaching career. I just knew it was time for a change and I wanted to be involved in Christian Education. I had no idea exactly what God had in store for me.

God placed a special burden on my heart for a Christian College long before I ever thought or dreamed of one being part of The Holy Church of God. I count it a great privilege to be teaching and helping mold the lives of the precious young people that I

am encountering at Heritage. Their dedication and willingness to serve God in whatever capacity He wants is phenomenal.

Ecclesiastes 11:1 says, "Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days." Each time I stand before my class and look into the eager faces of my students, I am made to feel that I am casting "bread upon the waters." Who knows what these young people will accomplish for Christ? No doubt, there are many great teachers, ministers, evangelists, and missionaries sitting under the sound of my voice preparing for a journey to carry the gospel to lost souls. I am excited to be a part of their lives.

It is an honor to be working with the dedicated staff at Heritage Seminary endeavoring to carry out the Will of God.

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Heritage Seminary
 707 Little Neck Road, Savannah, GA 31419
 912.921.0088
heritagechristianministries@gmail.com

THE TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT TEXT- PART 2

REV. E. R. RALSTON

Fallacious Proposition of the Time Gap Argument

Work	When Written	Earliest Copy	Time Span	# of Copies
New Testament	A.D. 40-100	A.D. 125	25 yrs.	24,000
Homer (Iliad)	900 B.C.	400 B.C.	500 yrs.	643
Sophocles	496-406 B.C.	A.D. 1000	1400 yrs.	193
Aristotle	384-322 B.C.	A.D. 1100	1400 yrs.	49"8

The time gap factor has always been an argument against the accuracy of the transmission of the New Testament text. The argument advances the premise that from the time that events supposedly occurred until the actual writing of those events many fables, myths, misconceptions, and exaggerations were inserted. For instance, it is postulated that because of this time gap copyists included in the manuscripts manufactured stories about the deity, miracles, crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Nothing could be further from the truth. "It is not uncommon for a gap of a thousand years or more to separate an ancient work and the earliest known copy of it. Things are different in the case of the New Testament, where several papyrus manuscripts are extant which copied within a century or so after the composition of the original documents. A papyrus fragment of John's Gospel found in Egypt is commonly dated to A.D. 125...A recent study dates an ancient manuscript Matthews Gospel to about A.D. 60!"⁷ The chart above exposes the fallacious proposition of the time gap argument:



The accepted text of ancient secular literature is accorded unparalleled latitude in determining accuracy, reliability, and trustworthiness. However, the New Testament autographs and manuscripts were completed within eighteen to sixty-five years of Jesus Christ and yet they are maligned and challenged as to their authenticity and accuracy. One additional note of support for the accuracy of the New Testament comes from the archaeological discovery of the James Ossuary. "Ossuaries were issued in Israel from about the second century B.C. until the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70...The inscription contained in the James Ossuary gives a clear first-century A.D. testi-

mony of Jesus, His father, Joseph, and brother, James. James is given in the gospel accounts as a brother of Jesus (Matthew 13:55)."⁹ From the information presented in this section it is clear that the spurious time gap argument is baseless and fallacious. The close proximity in the tie of the writing of the autographs and manuscripts to the time of Jesus Christ and the dating of the James Ossuary provide support and credibility to the accuracy of the transmission of the New Testament text.

In addition, extra biblical sources will be used to further support the defense of the accuracy and reliability of the New Testament text. For the sources to be of any viable benefit the conclusion must be reached that the accurate transmission of the New Testament text is justified by those sources. The first source to reference in support of the accuracy of the transmission of the New Testament text are the writings of the early Fathers of the New Testament Church. "It is very impressive to note that the scholars can recreate all but 11 verses of the New Testament by simply piecing together quotations of the early church Fathers of the second and third centuries."²⁴ Bernard Ramm, a noted theologian and expert in textual criticism wrote the following: "Practically the entire New Testament can be culled from citations in the Fathers. There is nothing in classical documents which even comes close to this...In the remarkable providence of God the text of the Bible in the original language forms the most reliably transmitted texts known to scholar-

ship."²⁵ Many additional references from textual critics could be cited in overwhelming support of the accuracy of the transmission of the New Testament text. However, a quotation of Tertullian, one of the early Fathers, effectively justifies the focus of this section. Tertullian on the accuracy of the transmission of the text stated, "I hold sure title-deeds from the original owners themselves, to whom the estate belonged. I am the heir of the apostles. Just as they carefully prepared their will and testament even so do I hold it."²⁶

The second source to reference in support of the accuracy of the transmission of the New Testament text are archaeological discoveries. For instance, the discovery of lectionaries is important. Lectionaries used in worship of the church, "preserve passages from the ninth century or later. Because they were used for public reading of the Scriptures their uniformity was carefully guarded, and they are useful in checking the type of text the medieval church officially sanctioned."²⁷

The additional support of historical confirmation of the accuracy of the scriptures adds to the argument in defense of the accuracy of the transmission of the New Testament text. Donald J. Wiseman wrote, "The geography of the Bible lands and visible remains of antiquity were gradually recorded until today more than 25,000 sites within this region dating to Old Testament times, in their broadest sense have been located. Among the finds are about half a million clay documents in the cuneiform script."²⁹ While archaeology does not directly prove the inspiration of the Scripture, it does confirm its accuracy, historical reliability, and credibility and such veri-

fication supports the argument of its accurate transmission. Noted Bible scholar F.F. Bruce wrote, "There is no body of ancient literature in the world which enjoys such a wealth of good textual attestation as the New Testament."³⁰ Finally, "Studies of the New Testament reveal that it has been copied with over 99 percent accuracy...since these works were regarded as religious writings, the accuracy of their transmission was important. All of this means that the New Testament is not only the best documented but also the most accurately copied book from the ancient world with the exception of the Old Testament, which was copied equally as well or better."³¹

7. Walter A. Elwell and Robert W. Yarbrough, *Encountering the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1998), 29.
8. Fred Williams, *Meticulous Care in the Transmission of the Bible*, www.bibleevidences.com/transmission.htm. Accessed 12/5/2015.
9. Holden and Geisler, *Op. Cit.*, 310-311.
24. Fred Williams, *Meticulous Care in the Transmission of the Bible*, www.bibleevidences.com/transmission.htm. Accessed 12/5/2015.
25. Bernard Ramm, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1978), 209.
26. William P. Grady, *Final Authority* (Scherverville, IN: Grady Publications, Inc. 1997), 40.
27. Merrill C. Tenny, *New Testament Survey-Revised* (Grand Rapids, MI; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1985), 419.
29. Geisler and Nix, *Op. Cit.*, 122.
30. Fred Williams, *Meticulous Care in the Transmission of the Bible*, www.bibleevidences.com/transmission.htm. Accessed 12/5/2015.
31. Norman L. Geisler, *A Popular Survey of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1984), 12.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHTS:

ISAAC PEYTON

Date of birth: February 16, 1997

Hobbies:

Reading,
Preaching, Going
on missions trips

Favorite color:

Blue

Favorite author:

Dale Carnegie
and Joel
Rosenberg

Music: Instrumental

Favorite holiday:

Thanksgiving and Christmas

Favorite thing about

Heritage Seminary:

The quality of the teaching.
(...the food is really good, too)



JARED CLIFFORD BURRIS III A.K.A. JC

Hobbies: Hunting, fishing, listening to
music, playing basketball and church

Favorite food:

Whatever i am
eating at that
time

Favorite books:

Spiritual
allegories

Favorite Music:

I love my Christmas music

My hometown: Atwater, Ca.

My father, Jared Burris, pastors a church
in my home town. I love the Lord with
all my heart and I desire to do whatever
God wills.



STUDENT MINISTRY

Bible Holiness Church, Elktion, VA

MINISTRY FROM FRONT PAGE

and sodium. These two elements are poisons. No one would eat chlorine or sodium individually. Yet, mixed together they become a normal part of evening dinner at most homes in America. So, it is with our lives that God can take events that are so unpleasant and mix them with grace and glory to produce a life filled with the favor of God.

We also notice the *nature of the process*—“work together for good.” The nature and heart of God are seen in the words “for good.” I remember when my parents would plant flowers and get the yard looking nice in the springtime. Inevitably, a large order of mulch would arrive to be spread around the flower beds to dress things up nicely and fertilize the plants. It was always beautiful. Yet, for the next couple of days after the mulch had been spread there would be a terrible smell. It was because one of the main ingredients of the mulch was manure. Ironically, the thing designed to help the plants grow nutritiously was what smelled so bad. In our lives, at times, there are unpleasant events or things we may not like to smell. But God has so engineered the trials of life to help us grow. God’s word also declares the person who endures affliction in this life will receive greater rewards in glory!

THE CONDITION OF THE PROMISE – “TO THEM THAT LOVE GOD”

The promise in this verse isn’t for everyone. It isn’t a random truth that can be applied to whoever. It is a special promise given directly to the child of God. Don’t forget that! Know that dur-

ing your greatest trials there is a God of heaven working solely on your behalf. You are not forgotten. You are not alone. Do you remember when the disciples were out on the sea and the storm arose that caused them to fear? God’s word declared in Mark 6:48, “he saw them toiling in rowing.” Jesus knew where the disciples were and the storm were encountering. Similarly, in our lives Jesus knows where we are (remaining hopeful) and what we are encountering (events of life, even suffering, have meaning).

This promise is given to those that love God—not what God has done for them! There are those who have chosen to love the gifts God has given them more than they love God Himself. What a tragedy! Loving God is more than loving Him for what He can do for you. Loving God is treasuring His presence, obeying His Word, and pursuing His will. Notice there are two aspects for those who love God that are displayed in the text: (1) *they are called*, and (2) *they have purpose*. These twin truths shatter all lies from the devil that we are unworthy or undeserving of this promise. God has CALLED you for His PURPOSE!

References

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