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BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF *RHYTHMS OF RENEWAL*

BUILDING A
RESILIENT
LIFE

HOW ADVERSITY AWAKENS
STRENGTH, HOPE, AND MEANING

A PDF COMPANION TO THE AUDIOBOOK

ZONDERVAN BOOKS

Building a Resilient Life

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CHAPTER ONE

AN ERA OF OVERWHELM

REFLECTIONS ON RESILIENCE

1. Have you taken the time to name the things you've lost over the last few years? If not, set aside thirty minutes to put together a list of what's different in your life.
2. Next to each item, summarize how it makes you feel. Use feeling words such as *angry*, *sad*, *lonely*, or *afraid*. Any feeling word will do.
3. Looking at your list of losses and your list of feelings, are you struggling to bounce back from a sense of ambiguous loss?

CHAPTER TWO

WHAT IS RESILIENCE, REALLY?

REFLECTIONS ON RESILIENCE

1. Can you point to any seasons of adversity in your life that made you stronger? What practices helped you navigate those times?
2. List the seasons of adversity that seem to have no end date. For each, identify which challenges you can walk away from and which you must endure.
3. Write a note to yourself—one that encourages you to endure in your present struggles. After writing it, how do you feel?

CHAPTER THREE

THE PAIN OF ADVERSITY

REFLECTIONS ON RESILIENCE

1. List the current adversities in your life. Which ones have you taken on voluntarily? Which ones were unexpected?
2. Make a list of the most resilient people you know. What characteristics do they share in common?
3. As you walk through this book, think of someone you can invite along on this journey of resilience. Commit to invite them into the process.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE WEIGHT OF SHAME

REFLECTIONS ON RESILIENCE

1. Spend about thirty minutes reflecting on potential areas of shame in your life. It won't be comfortable, but hang in there. Write down those areas of shame.
2. Examine how your body responded as you reflected on those areas of shame. Did your skin get hot? Did you grow short of breath? Did your heart pound or your ears ring? Be specific.
3. Name the person you intend to share this shame with, whether a counselor, loved one, or minister.

INVITE OTHERS IN

REFLECTIONS ON RESILIENCE

1. Consider those in the Gospels who shared their struggle with Jesus. Write down as many stories as you can. How did Jesus respond? How was their resilience increased in the sharing?
2. Can you think of a time when you struggled with shame, anxiety, depression, or addiction and then shared it with a trusted person? How did you feel after you shared?
3. Can you name some hidden struggle in your life now? Confess it to Jesus and then write the name of a safe person you will share that struggle with.

THE RHYTHM OF CONFESSION

REFLECTIONS ON RESILIENCE

1. Spend some time opening yourself up to God. Ask him to examine your heart and show you any areas of sin or shame that need to be confessed. Write down those areas in a journal.
2. Commit to the work of confessing sin to God and to those you've hurt. Write down a plan for confessing, including a time and place for confession and what you will say.
3. Is there anyone you need to forgive? Write their names on a piece of paper, along with why you feel hurt by them; then ask God to give you the same forgiveness for them he has given you. If you feel led, go to them. Clear the air. Bless them.

CHAPTER SEVEN

PREACH TO YOURSELF

REFLECTIONS ON RESILIENCE

1. What narrative have you believed about your life? What needs to shift in order for the way you see your future to be transformed?
2. How has your life inadvertently been conformed to the ways of this world?
3. In what practical ways can you renew your mind?

CHAPTER EIGHT

RETRAIN YOUR BRAIN

REFLECTIONS ON RESILIENCE

1. Which of your negative thought patterns or reactions to circumstances are most obvious to you?
2. What is a new routine—a simple strategy—you can set in place to retrain your brain's response to being confronted with a negative situation?
3. Which Bible verse or prayer can you memorize to reset your mind during the next moment you experience stress or anxiety?

CHAPTER NINE

THE TRUTH THAT SETS FREE

REFLECTIONS ON RESILIENCE

1. What circumstances have you experienced that made you feel bitter or angry toward God? There is nothing in your life that hasn't been sifted through his hands. Does this statement bring comfort or frustration? Why?
2. I use Scripture as my guide to know what is true. Where have you found guidance to better understand what is true? Does it feel like a reliable, unchanging source?
3. One hundred percent of us will experience physical death at some point in the future. Imagine for a moment a final charge you'd want to leave with those you love. What would it be?

CHAPTER TEN

TREAT ANXIETY AS A FRIEND

REFLECTIONS ON RESILIENCE

1. Name the areas of fear or anxiety in your life. Don't rush it. Do your best to name them all.
2. Ask "five whys" for one of those areas. See what it reveals as you press into the pain.
3. Are there any practical shifts you can make from what you learned, like the lesson I learned to refuse to overload my calendar? Write down three or four decisions that can keep the anxiety or fear at bay.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

TRAIN WITH RESISTANCE

REFLECTIONS ON RESILIENCE

1. Examine your physical, mental, and spiritual life. List any areas where you're experiencing breakdown.
2. List ways you opt for seeking comfort instead of training with resistance.
3. Determine separate plans to engage in resistance training for your mind, body, and spirit. Write those plans in your journal and implement them over the next few weeks.

GROW INCREMENTALLY

REFLECTIONS ON RESILIENCE

1. Examine the areas of your life where you feel less resilient. Is it in the arena of your health, your marriage, or your economic stability? Make a specific list.
2. What actions can you take to increase your resilience in those areas? Use your imagination and create action steps to implement habits of resilience in those areas.
3. Talk with your spouse, friend, or spiritual advisor and share your action plan for growing incrementally in resilience in the least resilient places of your life.

FOLLOW THE LONGING

REFLECTIONS ON RESILIENCE

1. Do you find yourself restless? How does this restlessness show up in your everyday life?
2. What is your favorite practice for discovering beauty? How often do you make space to engage that practice?
3. Create a daily plan for discovering or engaging beauty over the next week. Throughout the week, record how intentionally engaging beauty made you feel.

CREATE FLOURISHING SPACES

REFLECTIONS ON RESILIENCE

1. What are your favorite spaces in which you can rest and restore, and how can you incorporate the features of those spaces into your home?
2. When was the last time you intentionally put yourself in a challenging situation—one that could remind you that you have the grit to do what it takes? How did you feel after that experience?
3. The next time you gather with friends, how can you be intentional to help connect people at a deeper level? What questions can you ask that will allow people to share thoughts from their hearts that help build connection?

MAKE GOOD THINGS

REFLECTIONS ON RESILIENCE

1. List your “making” skills.
2. Examine your list. Which of these skills do you use on a regular basis? Which need honing?
3. Examine what gets in the way of your practice of making good things. Is it the television, social media, an endless buzzing of activity? Take an inventory, then make a plan to ruthlessly eliminate whatever distracts you from the practice of making things.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

LINK ARMS, JOIN HEARTS

REFLECTIONS ON RESILIENCE

1. Examine your community. List the people who help lighten your load.
2. What can you do to strengthen your community and make it more resilient?
3. Call at least one person on your list and set up a time to discuss ways to link arms. Imagine together what it might look like to share life together (be specific).

BUILD SMALL AND STRONG

REFLECTIONS ON RESILIENCE

1. Consider the closest twenty people in your life. Do you know their history, their needs, their burdens? Do they know yours? If they needed your help, would they even know that you cared?
2. Reach out to the people you listed, even if it's only one couple. See if they'd be willing to join in creating a shared community, and then ask what skills or resources each would be willing to contribute to the community.
3. Write out your desires and goals, noting the ways you want to forge community.

HARNESS THE POWER OF WE

REFLECTIONS ON RESILIENCE

Make this your ongoing reflection:

- Create a community journal that tracks your progress as a community.
- Keep a log of your successes and failures.
- Keep a list of events and birthdays.
- Write down new dreams and initiatives you've tackled as a community.
- Note prayer requests and miracles you've prayed for and waited for until God moved.
- Record generational blessings—the children in your community you prayed for and the way God used those prayers to display his power.
- Make a record you can return to at the end of each year and ultimately pass down through the years.