

Writing the Next Chapter of Your Life

Exhausted and heartbroken, we drove out of the city, everything we owned packed in a U-Haul, with a carsick dog and 1-year-old in tow. We were officially closing that chapter of ministry.

Exiting the city, I played back in my mind some wonderful climatic scenes: the adoption of our first child after 10 years of infertility and the supernatural growth of a previously declining congregation. However, during that long drive south, the devastating lows—my husband having a stress-induced heart attack at age 34, financial pressure due to our house in a previous state not selling for two years, and the draining struggle of trying to live in peace with a contentious church board—overshadowed the wonderful.

We felt God leading us to take some time to rest, reflect and rebound, so we headed to the Gulf Coast. Determined to not allow our waiting time to be wasted time, for the next six months we worked several jobs to make ends meet, walked the beach and prayed, asking God to begin writing our next chapter.

Resilience means “to spring back into shape after bending, stretching or being compressed.”

In our previous chapter, we had been bent, stretched and compressed, some due to our own actions and some due to the actions of others. During those six months, we felt the Holy Spirit molding us back into shape and showing us what it looks like to be resilient.

My husband was given this Scripture by God during our six-month sabbatical, and we made it our goal: “They stoned Paul and dragged him outside the city, thinking he was dead. But after the disciples had gathered around him, he got up and went back into the city” (Acts 14:19-20).

There may be times in ministry that we feel stoned, dragged around and left for dead, but if we determine to have a resilient spirit, those chapters don't have to be the end of the book!

*Reprinted with permission from © Her Green Room Assemblies of God USA. **Jennifer Stafford** is a wife to a passionate, wonderful man, Chad, and mommy to a smart, funny, heart-after-God little boy, Evan. She and her husband have served in full time ministry together for over 15 years, and four years ago partnered with the Church Multiplication Network to plant a church in Daphne, Alabama.*