

In late December of 2021 I had just been promoted to a leadership job with the State. I wasn't prepared for what was to come in just a few short months, when it seemed like my world was being rocked off of its foundation. I realized that it was one year ago today that I left my job with the State, not quite sure where I was figuratively, mentally, or emotionally. I found out two days before my last day that I had been hired by the register's office for our county, so relieved, I left with another job to go to. That job only lasted two months. I don't think it was the answer to my situation, so I ended up quitting that job too. Circumstances at the time were such that I had to make some hard decisions.

During this time, my divorce after thirty-two years of marriage was just over a year old. I was still hurting deeply from that, for various reasons. I had full knee replacement surgery on March 16 of last year. I found out about a month later that my ex-husband married the woman he found all too quickly, to replace me, on March 17, the day after my surgery. I didn't learn about it from him. Everyone in the family knew about his marriage but me. My sons came and saw me after my surgery, knowing their dad had remarried, but said nothing, at his request. He kept telling everyone that he would tell me himself.

My grandsons went to visit with him and it was when they came home and we were sitting at the dinner table when I found out "Grandpa is married now! They have rings on their fingers and everything." I was unable to breathe, unable to speak, and I just stared at the boys as if they had two heads. When I asked them to clarify, they repeated the same thing, and I lost it. Every emotion you could imagine surged through my body. I called my kids, I called his parents and his sister, asking, "Why didn't anyone tell me?" They all said that 'he' specifically said he wanted to tell me himself.

On top of that news, his new wife's mother fell and had to go tend to her. Forgetting that we had moved to be closer to his parents for that very reason, my ex-husband informed me that after 'her' house was sold, he would be moving out of the state so they could be closer to her mother. Say What? If this decision affected just him and me, I wouldn't have had a problem with it. But we shared custody of our two grandsons. How in the world would he be able to carry his half of this obligation? As it was, he rarely saw the boys anyway. My biggest concern was how I would manage when they were home and even when they started school, and I had to go to work, with an hour long commute each way? What if they got sick? What if they got hurt? He was supposed to be my back-up for these situations, and now he was planning to move out of the state.

In April and May, I was still recovering from my surgery, going to physical therapy each week, using up every bit of leave I had accumulated. I thank God for an understanding boss, who knew I was dealing with a lot. On top of the personal dilemmas, I was still trying to learn my job. There were stresses involved with that, dealing with people that weren't always helpful, and then during the month of June, I had to defend my faith and take a stand for my beliefs because I disagreed with an email I had received at work, encouraging us to wear rainbow t-shirts in support of pride month. I was no longer able to keep my thoughts to myself, and nearly walked off the job then and there.

In July, my brother was to come and visit me but had to postpone because he was diagnosed with Covid. When he finally was able to come, the day he arrived, I was diagnosed with Covid as well. I had to ask my ex-husband to come and take the boys, not only because I wasn't feeling well at all, but they were about to start school. Again, I was panicking about that, because I didn't know what I would do in the event of an emergency. It was while I was home, being cared for by my brother, that I decided it was time to quit.

I failed to mention that throughout all of this, I continued seeking God daily. He was my source of strength each day that I had to get up out of bed and face it all again. Between his divine guidance and protection and the priceless friendship of my dear friend, Lori, I miraculously made it through this horrible time. When I made the decision to quit my job, along with all of its benefits, etc., I absolutely knew I would be okay. I stepped out in faith, knowing my hope was solely in him and his will for me.

Initially, when I was hired for the local job, I thought that was an answered prayer, allowing me to work close to home. But I believe God meant for me to stop the daily grind, and just rest and trust in him. I was miserable at that job, and I can't tell you how good it felt to realize that I didn't have to stay. My God was bigger than that job. He was bigger than

the bills I'd have to pay, and bigger than the garbage my ex-husband had put me through. I made the decision to withdraw my 401k, splitting it in half for 2022 and then 2023. It provided income as we needed it, and it was supplemented with alimony and child support payments from the state. I tithed faithfully, knowing God was my provider, and I cannot tell you how he has blessed me over and over again.

With their grandpa living so far away, I was able to get the boys to and from school, which was especially a blessing due to the bus driver shortages and our never knowing if we would have a bus come each day. I had my children and grandchildren at my house for Thanksgiving, and we all went to my oldest son's house for Christmas. My ex-husband missed all of it. And the saddest part is that he thinks everything is just fine. Everyone but him can see the situation for what it really is, and he is the one missing out.

I have watched God move in my life this past year, in awe. He has provided above and beyond my needs and has blessed me with renewed relationships with all three of my kids, and acceptance of my lot in raising my grandsons. I am writing this week's blog from my new home in Alabama, where I am now physically closer to my kids. Would you believe I made the decision to sell my house, maybe two months ago? We placed a 'For Sale' sign on my townhome on a weekend and it was under contract by Wednesday of that week. I have only been able to do this by the grace of God. Again, I have seen his hand in everything, and I am so honored to be able to share this with you.

I cannot believe what has happened in just one year. I was in the most hopeless moments of my adult life just twelve months ago, and now, I live in a new state, a new home, and a new job (from home!), and I am at peace. My God has carried me these months with love and care, and I just want to praise him and tell you about how he wants to do the same for you. This year, the most important lesson I've learned is to stop praying that God will bend to my will, but that my prayers will be in alignment with HIS PLAN for my life.

May God bless you richly, and remember, you are never alone.

Blessings,

Lisa Jo

