

I can't begin to express how thankful I feel today, for so many reasons. My grandsons are back home with me now, ready to start a new school year. The last few days before they arrived, I was in an emotional tug-of-war, so excited for their return, and yet I knew my quiet house would be a distant memory. As I sit here now, I am really glad they're here. Last week I asked my neighbor how he does it, living alone all-the-time. He said it's really hard, but you get used to it. I agreed with him on it being hard, but I never want to get used to it.

I already decided this would be the last year I would have the boys spend the entire summer at their grandpa's house. It's just too long for them to be 'guests' in a strange home, and too long for this grandma to be without them. Granted, I need a break now and then, but just a week occasionally would do wonders for me. One to two months is way too long. They're coming into the age where they will want to spend summer days with friends, and I want to encourage that. I pray their memories while growing up under me will prove to be good ones.

During my alone time, for the most part I was able to keep busy and occupy my overthinking mind. I planned to host a small group through church over the summer, but no one signed up for my class. I'm a newbie, so I get it. But it kind of blew my Sunday night activity out of the water. I signed up to attend another small group class, but when I saw that it was located in a part of town that I wasn't familiar with, I bowed out. I even signed up for a painting class, hoping to meet other people. I was the only person who showed up, so I painted alone. I was beginning to think God had a really strange sense of humor. I spent a lot more time at home alone than I had planned with Lucky, my little dog, as my constant shadow.

I filled my days with crafts, shopping therapy, and eating dinner out once in a while. I eat out alone often, but it wasn't as fun this time. I worked on polishing the pages of another book I've written, currently being drafted with a self-publishing company. The first book I published was okay, but it probably shouldn't have been published. I wrote it mainly to share with my kids' things they would never know about my family, and the things I went through growing up. They never knew anyone in my family really, except my sister. I wrote the book with good intentions, but I don't see God's fingerprint in the pages.

With this current book, I can say that God was my inspiration, and I prayed over each chapter, asking God to give me the words he wanted me to write. In my heart, I believe he was with me every step of the way. Just as I know now, that through this summer of being by myself, God never left my side. I agonized often, asking him what everything has been for. I made the move to be closer to my sons, only for them to be silent and absent for much of the time. I hosted my personal pity-parties, asking why some things are granted to some, but not to others, not to me. But as I have said before, I remembered once again that God owes me nothing, and I will continue to praise Him because of what Jesus did on the cross.

My summer was hard, but I am on the other side now. I am beginning to see the wisdom in why God allowed me to experience this time alone. I have faced many trials and hardships, but I've never come out of them feeling as strong as I do right now. I managed to endure whatever trials came at me before. This time, I had no choice but to spend my days communing with God, in his word, and in prayer. Not only did he show me that I have continued to survive the events of the past, but that I'm capable of accomplishing goals I believed were too far out of reach before. He has shown me that I really am able to do hard things.

Blessings,

Lisa Jo

