

Hello, my friends! I thought I knew what I was going to write about, to encourage you in your life and faith, but it seems like I'm the one that needs encouraging today. I want to share my thoughts as I always do, but I would sincerely love to hear from any of you who might be able to relate to what I share, and how you manage times like these.

As briefly as I can, my story involves growing up in an ungodly home. I met, married, and divorced my husband of thirty-two years, officially in May 2021. Before the divorce, we had three children and our daughter, the oldest, fell into drug addiction and became a mom to two precious boys. Because of the drugs, my ex-husband and I gained custody of our two grandsons. Following the divorce, my ex-husband remarried in March 2022, then moved eight hours away, leaving me to raise the boys by myself.

I wish those events were as quick as that last paragraph took to write, but it was fraught with pain, tears, and heartbreak for all involved, I can assure you. By God's grace, I believe we have made it past that cycle, and I live in my own home with my grandsons, now eleven and thirteen years old. Their mom has been drug-free for the past three years, and is in the boys' life, thankfully, but lives about one hundred miles away. My ex-husband still lives a day's drive away, so our grown children and our grandsons see him once or twice a year. My two sons live near me, less than ten minutes away, but I never see them.

And so is my dilemma. Since I became a Christian over thirty years ago, I was convinced that my 'thorn,' like Paul, was the battle with my weight and low self-esteem. I spent so much time in prayer over these things, asking God to remove them from me.

Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong. (2 Corinthians 12:7-10 NIV)

My friends, I am still chubby, and I want to lose some weight, but I am a different person than I used to be. I continue to work daily on removing those old negative thoughts and tapes in my head, but God has blessed me personally, beyond what I could ever hope for. His provision over me and my grandsons is miraculous if you want to know the truth.

But this week, and even this morning, I was writing down my prayers. I've had a tough bout of loneliness this week. I've written before about going through the desert with God after moving here, spending so much time alone, but it was needed. I've come so far, learning the positives of getting to know my true self after a lifetime of codependency. I've learned that I'm capable of doing hard things because I've had to.

I choose to use the term, 'there is a sadness over me,' when I feel this way. God knows me better than anyone, and he knows my hopes and dreams. At sixty-one years old, I still pray for someone to love until I am called home. I was sure that since God made me, he instilled in me those dreams. But today it occurred to me that being alone may be my new thorn. I realize it is when I'm feeling this sadness, I lean on him that much more. I have to agree, "When I am weak, then I am strong."

And so, I ask for encouragement with living alone; living alone but raising grandchildren; grown children who don't want you in their lives or are too busy to be a part of your life. Just needing a hug and there's no one around. I would love to hear your stories, truly. It helps us to know we're not alone on our journeys. You don't have to respond here on the site. You are free to contact me via my direct email, blog4lisajo@outlook.com. I promise I won't share your stories here. Thank you for spending time with me today. Ironically today, I need to tell myself, "Lisa, you're never alone."

Blessings,

Lisa Jo