

January 2026 is no longer in front of me, thank God. These five weeks seemed to last forever, especially the time between my mid-month and end-of-month paychecks. Add to that the dark and gloomy days and my tendency toward being overly melancholy, I say good riddance.

I am hopeful for what comes during the rest of this year, but I honestly don't know what I'm hopeful for, specifically. I'm making plans for major improvements to my budgeting system. As I inch toward retirement, I'm preparing for when the boys eventually move out after they finish school. I'm focusing on being financially sound, whatever that may look like. What I do in the next five years will determine where I live, and how I'll live. I'm going to do my best.

Yesterday, I realized that we will have lived here for three years, come summertime. My mind cannot even register this, as the first two years were so, so hard. It has taken a lot to come to a place of relative peace, and yet I still have so many questions and the unknown far outweighs what I do know. I do know that my heartfelt hopes and dreams feel as far away as they did back then, so that stings a little bit. But God has been good, and faithful.

I have grown a lot, I know that. Perhaps I'm more skeptical about other people, but I've also relaxed a bit, not really giving a flip what other people think about me. I am also more aware than ever before that this world is not my home, and I pray for strength as I watch and wait for Jesus to return. Not a death wish, but longing for the day when I can say, "I'm home."

Of course, I am over the moon with the news that I have a new grandbaby coming this year. I'm even hopeful there may be two! My oldest son and his new bride are ready for a family, so we will have to see. I am so excited at the prospect of a new little one, or two, in our midst.

I've always wondered how people can say there is no God after looking at a precious newborn baby. Proof of his divine power is evident from the top of their sweet, soft head, down to their perfect little baby toes. And the love in your heart that is forever tied to that little one the moment you hold them in your arms is truly spiritual. Yes, I am very hopeful about this.

I also have a few trips planned this year. One just for myself, and then another with family. I do look forward to these events. I have learned that January is easier if I make plans for the rest of the year, again, adding hope to the dreary days. I always perk up with the onset of springtime. New life, new growth, and the world is green again. Somehow in that season, I find the strength to forge ahead.

So it is with a thankful heart that I have lived through another January, heart and soul intact. I have to remind myself that life must be lived just one day at a time. This simple rule keeps me going, knowing the bad days will soon be gone, and tomorrow is wide open for a do-over, a new start. One requirement that never changes, however, is to make sure God is leading me, always.

Blessings,

Lisa Jo

