

## Leaving the Land of Woe

Why and how did I get into the Land of Woe, this is my story...

Give my cancer testimony – start with Jessica then my parents and my diagnosis.

**Psalm 91: 7&8** – During Jessica’s cancer battle this was my battle cry, it meant more during my own cancer battle.

**Job 3:25** – I have lived this verse during and after my cancer battle.

It was as I battled cancer that I learned about a dark place that I call the Land of Woe.

This message is about leaving the Land of Woe, it is a story that needs to be told and a skill set we all need to hold on to. You need to make this skill set your own.

There is no peace in the Land of Woe, you have to find its borders and leave. Don’t stay there but you will probably go there again someday.

Before you can leave the Land of Woe you have to realize you are there. During my time in the Land of Woe I read some of Job and journaled often, some of what I am about to share is raw, but it is what I experienced and it is part of my story.

**Job 2:4-5** Skin for Skin – Physical pain and sickness can have a big impact on you, as can depression, mental illness or substance abuse. It can also impact your relationship with God, I learned this the hard way as I withdrew from him during some of my darker moments. I have repented for that and rebuilt my relationship with God and I am now in a much better place.

### **Job 4:1-5**

- **Verses 1-4** are a prophetic word that Jeromus gave me during my cancer battle, it was meant to encourage me.
- **Verse 5** I now know and understand because I have lived it.

Job’s friends kept quiet and sat beside him for 7 days, they were there for him. This was in my opinion the best thing they did for him. But eventually we all

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have to give our advice and it was not all good. Matter of fact most of theirs was not. In the Desert Fathers #40 Abba Arsenius said – I have often repented of having spoken, but never of having been silent.

**Job 6:8-13** – I have begun to live and understand this scripture more deeply and I don't want to know it any better.

- **Verses 8&9** – God won't grant this request.
- **Verse 10** – I can't imagine feeling this way, I have never exulted my pain.
- **Verse 11** – What if my strength is patience, that would be a super power – but it is a fruit...
- **Verse 12** – The strength of stones, this verse really resonates with me, as you know I love my stones.
- **Verse 13** – We have the Holy Spirit that lives within us, Job did not! The Holy Spirit is my ultimate resource.

**Job Chapter 7** – This is a hard chapter to read, especially when you have lived parts of it. As I read it during my battle I highlighted the parts of it that I have experienced. I don't ever want to go so low that I experience the rest. Walk me out of my pit Oh Lord lift me up.

- **Verse 1-3** – Some of life is like a hired hand but not all of it. I know what months of emptiness feels like, I think we all do. A few nights of misery, hopefully not to many.
- **Verse 4** – I have had nights like this.
- **Verse 6** – is definitely true.
- **Verses 9 & 10** – Jesus did, he went down and came back up. He was the only one, this was due to the power of the cross and his resurrection.
- **Verses 17-21** – I have never felt this way and I hope I never do.

**Job Chapter 10** – Another hard chapter and one I journaled about as well.

- **Job 10:1-3** – I have felt this way from May – July of 2025. I definitely spoke at times in the bitterness of my soul. I spoke to God this way and

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my wife heard it on more than one occasion. This is not a good place to be.

- **Job 10:18-22** – at one point before my cancer battle I wrote “thankfully I have never felt like this” - That is no longer true.
- Then on 8/5/25 I wrote – “the closest to this I have ever been my worst day.
- **Verses 21 & 22** - describe what I call the Land of Woe.
- The only good thing about having your worst day is that after it is done things start getting better. There may be setbacks along the way but it will never be that bad again.

**Matthew 18:7** – Sin and temptation are part of the Land of Woe. Even if it is just the sin of pulling away from the Lord in the midst of your troubles and pain.

**John 11:35** – “**Jesus wept**”- Desert Fathers # 41 – Truly you are blessed, Abba Arsenius for you wept for yourself in this world! He who does not weep for himself here below will weep eternally hereafter; so it is impossible not to weep, either voluntarily or when compelled through suffering. - I did my weeping here.

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**So how do I leave the Land of Woe?** - First of all, you have to realize you are there! You either realize this yourself or someone has to point it out to you. I actually figured it out for myself, pain and despair caused me to become unconsolable and I didn't like the person I had become. I would always apologize to God after these dark times and repent as best I could. I had to learn how to rise above these dark times and go to my happy place so to speak.

If God sends someone to point it out to you please swallow your pride and listen to them. It probably wasn't easy for them to tell you and I know it is not always to hear these messages.

- Limit distractions – focus on getting out of there. –
  - **Colossians 3:2** -  
Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.
  - **Matthew 6:33** - But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.
  
- Center yourself – spend time in prayer, quiet your mind, renew it.
  - **Romans 12:2**  
Do not be conformed to this world,<sup>1</sup> but be transformed by <sup>d</sup>the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may <sup>e</sup>discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.
  
- Ask God for direction
  - **Proverbs 3:5&6** – Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him and he will make straight your paths.
  - **Psalms 32:8**- I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you.

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- Pray with a trusted friend – its not enough to just ask for prayer or to just pray for yourself.
  - **Matthew 18:20 when two or more are gathered...**
  - You need fellow believers praying with you out loud exhorting you, encouraging you. For me it was my wife Debbie, Ken Garcia and Gary Walton.
  
- Pursue the light
  - **John 8:12** I am the light of the world
  - **1 John 1:7** but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light
  - **Psalms 119:105** Your word is a lamp for my feet and a light on my path.
  
- Seek Peace
  - **Hebrews 12:14** – Strive for peace with everyone and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.
  
- You have to break the chains of Isolation!
  - **Psalms 107:14** – He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and burst their bonds apart.
  - You have to push yourself to get out of the house, out of your funk even if you don't feel like it.
  - The day you don't feel like going to church is most likely the day you need it the most.
  
- It may take awhile for your physical condition to improve but your spiritual condition can improve very quickly.
  
- Remember what your Land of Woe looked and felt like as you leave it. This way if you ever find yourself headed back there you can catch yourself before it is too late. Once you are out of there share your testimony. I am pretty sure somebody needs to hear it!