

Dear Lisa,

I hope this letter finds you surrounded by peace and the knowledge that you are deeply loved by our Creator. I've been thinking about you and wanted to share some thoughts that have been on my heart.

Your presence at our Bible studies has always been such a blessing. Your insights, your questions, and the lighthearted way you approach even the deeper topics make our time together richer and more meaningful. I know you've been feeling uncertain about how you express yourself, but I want to encourage you in this: your voice is a gift from God, and it brings so much life to those around you.

I was reflecting on the story of Mary and Martha in Luke 10:38-42, which I think speaks to this beautifully. When Jesus visited their home, Mary sat at His feet, not just passively listening but engaging with Him in conversation, seeking understanding and wisdom. This was a profound act of devotion and courage in her time, and Jesus commended her for it. He did not rebuke Martha for her work but reminded her that Mary had chosen to focus on what truly mattered—connection and engagement with Him.

What I see in this story is a reminder that God values our authentic selves, especially when we come to Him with an open heart, even when it was against societies norms at the time. To paraphrase my understanding of the passage, Martha was saying "Why isn't Mary in the kitchen where she belongs?" And Jesus said "She is doing the right thing by being here and engaging with me, and Matthew 7:2". Just as Mary actively participated in dialogue with Jesus, your questions and comments reflect that same spirit of engagement and seeking.

You might also find encouragement in John 4, where Jesus spoke with the Samaritan woman at the well. She wasn't quiet or reserved—she conversed openly with Jesus, even questioning Him. Her willingness to engage led her to a deeper understanding of who He was and ultimately brought her community closer to God. Jesus never told her to be silent; instead, He honored her voice and her heart.

In our relationships, whether in marriage, friendship, or community, we are all different, complementing one another in unique ways. Some of us are more talkative, others more reflective, and that balance is a gift. In my own marriage, I've noticed how beautifully my wife's quiet wis-

dom complements my more outgoing nature. It reminds me of 1 Corinthians 12:12-27, where Paul describes the body of Christ as having many parts, each essential and purposeful in its own way.

Lisa, your voice is one of those essential parts in the body of Christ. Your willingness to share, to ask, and to engage doesn't just enrich Bible study and Sunday school—it encourages others to open up and reflect more deeply. I know I've learned from you many times and left our discussions feeling inspired and closer to God.

Romans 12:6 says, "We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us." Your ability to engage so fully, to speak your heart, and to inspire others is part of the grace God has given you. It's not something to shy away from or feel uncertain about—it's something to celebrate and nurture.

I hope you'll allow yourself to rest in the knowledge that God created you exactly as you are, with a voice and spirit that reflect His love and light. Please know how much I value and appreciate you, and I hope to see you again at Bible study and church soon.

You've always reminded me of Philippians 4:8: "Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things." That verse brings you to mind because your voice consistently brings out these qualities in our conversations.

With gratitude and hope,

Andrii Zvorygin