

## **"Just Be Grateful"**

**By Pastor Bill Hayden**

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My mother taught me a great lesson as a child: to be grateful and say "Thank you" when given a gift.

Living with gratitude keeps my heart tender and reminds me not to neglect small things that we can take for granted. I have gone here and there with little thought or effort because I have become accustomed to the daily routine. I am sure that others can relate to a daily routine that seems effortless. Every now and then, I receive a big dose of reality that awakens me to appreciate the small things that I have taken for granted. These small things, often overlooked, are the true treasures of life. Embracing gratitude can make us feel appreciative and content with what we have.

When you and I are physically fit, the challenges of competing are fun and exciting, whether we win or lose. Our attitude could be, wait until next time... it will be my turn to win! Seldom do we think, "It could be our last game or competition together." We could be at the top of our game, and within a day, that could all change. Very few of us have plans when that day comes. Sometimes, there may be gentle signs like your timing is off, reoccurring stiffness, longer recovery from injuries, etc.

What are your plans when you can't do the things you have taken for granted over the years? Will you become a bitter person or a better person, who reflects on the past joys you shared with others while thanking God for His love? Reflecting on past joys can bring a sense of nostalgia and appreciation for the good times we've had.

If we dwell on what we cannot do, it can affect us mentally, physically, emotionally, socially, and spiritually. Having all our senses and abilities intact is undoubtedly a tiny thing we can often take for granted, but it is a significant and precious gift. I've known people who have withdrawn from others because of disabilities due to aging. Believe me, that is not the time to fold your arms and close yourself off from others. If there was ever a day that we needed to walk with open arms to embrace those who understand and love us, it's then!

Each day, I'm abundantly grateful for all I have experienced and will experience with the gift I have been given. I make a habit of giving thanks to the Lord for the simple things throughout the day. You will be amazed by the peace in your soul. May we be reminded of Psalms 118:24: *"This the day that the Lord has made; We will rejoice and be glad in it."*

Please celebrate with us and experience the Good Life at the Villages Community Chapel in Cribari Auditorium every Sunday at 10 a.m. to be encouraged over the Word of Life and enjoy coffee and cookies with friends. The chapel is a place for needs to be met, faith to be affirmed, and new friends to embrace. You can view our worship services on YouTube at [www.villagescommunitychapel.vgcc.club](http://www.villagescommunitychapel.vgcc.club)