

## **“God Watches Over Us”**

**By Pastor Bill Hayden**

**10/24/24**

When I think about how my life could have turned out in my brokenness, I'm truly grateful for God's mercy and love. Growing up, there were plenty of opportunities to have had a 'not-so-positive' life because of the trauma of a dysfunctional family.

It may be hard to imagine what others have dealt with, trying to find meaning in everything they endured, to survive their youth and achieve adulthood. Without the love of two committed parents, to encourage and discipline you, you are almost set up for failure.

As a troubled kid (because of abandonment from my parents and siblings) living in Gary, Indiana, in the fifties, I would act out in school. Because I was an emotional wreck, my attention to my school work was lacking which caused me to repeat the first grade.

On one occasion, I received a report card, and on the way home, I hid the card in a slit in a fence. My aunt and uncle, who I stayed with, asked me about my report card, and I told them I had not received one. As time passed, they inquired at the school, and that did not go well for me. You can imagine what that meant for me when they found out that I lied, (they were disciplinarians), I received an old-fashioned beating.

My older cousin had a habit of bullying and tormenting me at night when I was trying to sleep. One night I found my uncle's 22 pistol, pointed it at him and told him to leave me alone... which he did immediately. Afterward, he began to black-mail me and on one occasion my aunt's friend overheard him while we were taking a bath at her home. She promptly called my uncle, who then told us, he had something for us, when we returned home. It was Friday night, and we had to return home on Sunday. I lost my taste for food, and oh, did I pray! To no avail! As soon as we got home, the beatings began with my cousin, then me... my cousin, and ending with me!

Throughout my adolescent life, there have been times when I was in danger, but God protected me from myself. After committing my life to Christ at 19, I thanked my uncle for “The Beatings.” He told me that I needed it!

Hebrews 12:6 ESV: *“For the Lord disciplines the one He loves and chastises every son whom He receives.”*

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)