

# Grateful Living



**Aging with an attitude of thankfulness is a challenge!**

Facing ongoing change, health issues, family concerns and future fears take their toll on the pleasures that we have looked forward to as the “Golden Years”! We try to eat responsibly, exercise within limits and enjoy life-long friendships. We hold fast to our family relationships and attempt to keep up with our media-driven kids and grandkids. This can leave us tired, disconnected, sad, and sometimes grumpy. We become more unsure of how we really fit.



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One of the ways to combat some of these overwhelming realities and feelings is by developing an attitude of gratefulness, focusing on the good we see around us.

Living gratefully is not easy, but it can be developed with practice. Although difficult, it is also an ongoing choice! When waking each morning, what are the first things that come to mind? The choice to be thankful, despite the pain or the circumstances, will make a huge difference in the day ahead.

You may ask, “How can choosing gratefulness improve my day....my life?”

It is well known that choosing to live with a grateful attitude will result in healthier living. Many studies show that our physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health improve when we accept our life circumstances and choose to be thankful despite the pain they bring. When we are thankful, we view our situation and the people around us with fresh perspective. We choose to look for the good. We choose to speak encouraging words. We choose to make delicious lemonade from life’s

sour lemons. As we choose to be thankful and appreciative, we begin to feel better and may even discover a new energy for living.

Secondly, living gratefully opens our eyes to the real world. It gives us perspective. When we are experiencing our own life’s challenges but choose to look beyond ourselves to the needs of others, we will begin to see opportunities where we can make a difference. Choosing to live with thankful hearts can give us the impetus to reach out beyond ourselves to help others in their need.

Thirdly, living gratefully changes us and changes those around us. We discover that choosing to be thankful, even though our circumstances are unchanged, leads us to a deep settled contentment with life as it is, not what we wish it could be. This attitude of gratitude gives us perspective and helps us see others and situations in a more positive light. More than that, we will discover an inner peace settling into our hearts. Our dear ones will enjoy being around us. We will be a blessing to them.

We can learn from Saint Paul who learned to be content in any circumstance, even being thankful in all things. He had experienced God’s forgiving love and protection. He chose to face each trying day with gratefulness and complete confidence in the One who held his future. This also is our choice.

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