



Combating Feelings of Uselessness

LifeCare Memos[®] – Messages of Compassion

Past Activities

As we grow older, most of us can no longer do what we used to do. We do not have the health, the energy, nor the mental quickness we used to enjoy. Not only have many of us retired from jobs that gave us meaning and enjoyment, but we can no longer do some other activities that brought joy and purpose to our lives. Some of those activities may have included preparing a special family meal on holidays, fixing the car, working in our flower garden, helping out a neighbor with home repairs, volunteering at our church, or any number of other useful and pleasurable activities.

Retaining Value

How can we keep from being overwhelmed by feelings of uselessness? What can keep us from thinking we're "not good for much" anymore? What can we do to feel valued at this point in our lives? How can we see ourselves as having an unchanging self-worth even if we have to lie in bed or sit in a wheelchair all day? Here are a few suggestions.

Suggestions

1) We must remember who we are.

As human beings we have been made in the image of **GOD**. As Christians we are children of **GOD** and heirs of the King. These realities do not change whether we are physically or mentally able to do anything or not. Our value does not come from what we *do* in life, but from who we *are*.

2) We must still do what we are capable of doing in life.

Everyone can reach out in their own way to those around. I have a chaplain friend who tells the Residents in his facility, "As long as you can smile, you can still serve." In a Nursing Home we can give a warm smile to fellow Residents or staff. We can say, "Thank you" to staff members who serve us. We can give a word of encouragement to workers who come to help us such as, "You do such a good job here! Thank you so much."

The Golden Rule reminds us to do to others as we would like them to do to us. Since we want to be treated with kindness and respect, we should remember to treat others the same way.

3) We can pray for others.

Everyone around us has genuine needs. As a result many people need our prayers. They may include our fellow Residents in a healthcare facility, the staff, our family members, the sick and hurting elsewhere, our government leaders, our clergymen, and many others. Prayer is something we can do any time and any place. We do not need any special training to pray: we just talk to God in our own words.

Prayer is something we can do even as we lie in bed or sit in our wheelchair. Let me share an example of someone who prayed for years, even in difficult circumstances.

William Carey, known as “The Father of Modern Missions,” was a 19th century British missionary, who accomplished many things during his forty years of service in India. However, hardly anyone knew that William had a sister, Polly, who was bedridden and almost completely paralyzed for 52 years. William regularly wrote to Polly, sharing details of his struggle to create primers and dictionaries in the various Indian dialects, as well as the difficulty of figuring out how to get the books typed and printed. Whenever she received a letter from William, Polly lifted the needs up before **GOD**. Every day for 52 years, she faithfully prayed for her brother, all the while lying in her bed, almost completely unable to move.

4) We can thank God for the things we were able to do.

The book of Ecclesiastes in the Old Testament reminds us that **GOD** has given us time to do everything He wants us to do in life.

“To everything, there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven. A time to be born and a time to die” (Ecclesiastes 3:1-2).

This passage goes on to speak of many different activities of life. There is a time for all of them in **GOD**'s view of things. We should not forget to thank **GOD** for all the opportunities He has given us over the years.

5) We should accept with grace the things we can not do.

Of course, this is easier said than done. We need **GOD**'s help to do this. That's where the first line of the Serenity Prayer reminds us, "**GOD**, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change." The sooner we accept our limitations the happier we will be. Let's ask **GOD** to grant us contentment in life, and to see beyond our current health care challenges.

6) We should remember the best is yet to come.

From the Bible, the Apostle Paul speaking to believers to the church at Corinth wrote,

*"No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what **GOD** has prepared for those who love him" (1 Corinthians 2:9).*

That promise is for all of us who believe in Jesus as **LORD** and Savior. Truly, the best is yet to come!

Our Prayer

It is our prayer that one or more of these suggestions will be helpful to you. Above all, do not forget that you are greatly loved by our Heavenly Father.

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When experiencing the stresses of life, people need support. The Psalmist needed that support and found it when he turned to **GOD**. He said, "*Look to my right and see; no one is concerned for me. I have no refuge; no one cares for my life. I cry to You, O **LORD**; I say, 'You are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living'" (Psalm 142:4-5).*

LifeCare Memos are designed as messages of compassion that integrate biblical guidelines for emotional and spiritual well-being. Topics focus on various life-care issues and address them from the perspective of Scripture.