

Topic: Thank You

Counting My Blessings  
*by Liz Gibbons*

I had my 87<sup>th</sup> birthday in mid July. I never dreamed I would live this long and am grateful every day when I awaken. The aging process has been an adjustment. I have fought it and cursed at it. Our society is so focused on youthfulness that it took me a long time to accept that a slowing down stage is part of life. Actually, I have not fully accepted it, but reality is forcing me to acknowledge some limitations. Our society does not understand nor value the later stages in life where world obligations to work and family have been completed, and we are naturally programmed to change our focus. We are often referred to as “useless eaters” and unlike some cultures, such as the early American Indians, we are not looked to for wisdom. Spiritual traditions teach that this is the time in life to develop higher consciousness, to develop wisdom, discrimination, and detachment. You can compare this to the ripening of fruit. But our society sees it as a time of decline and has little regard for the beauty and wisdom many elders possess. As far as I am aware few churches stress the importance of this change of focus in their teachings.

Along this line I find that many interests from the early stages of my life no longer interest me such as the latest movies, fashions, celebrities, television series, or sports teams. I am grateful to be able to spend some time most evenings quietly reading a variety of books. I am thankful every day that I am able to still live independently, drive my car, do my own shopping, prepare my meals, grow a garden, and take care of my condo. Continuing to participate in the Writer’s Group gives me a weekly focus, particularly when other activities have ceased. I am grateful for the many people who still play a part in my life and for those who over the years supported me with their friendship and particularly for those who taught me some hard life lessons.