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Be Alert for the Blessings

by
Tom Holbrook

Mondays are a great time to go out for breakfast so Judy and I decided we would do that very thing yesterday and complete a few chores at the same time. We headed off for our favorite morning eating place, the Son Rise Café in Southern Trace, and stopped at the semi-new Villages Library on the way to drop off some overdue books. By the way, if you haven't tried out the Library please do so. It's new so the bookshelves aren't full as yet but they're getting there. You can help expand their inventory if you've got some nice new or slightly used hardbacks that are looking for a new home... they would be very happy at the Village Library. It's located behind the Southern Trace Fire Station, across the street from the Villages Charter High School.

You never know what a morning out will bring your way and Judy and I are always looking for exciting things or interesting people to pop up in our path and we weren't disappointed this day. We were seated next to a lovely lady sitting alone with a bandana on her head, which immediately spelled "chemo" to my mind. As you know it's difficult for most people to strike up a conversation with strangers and especially so if there is an indication of a health problem with the other individual. "What if I say something that will depress them, or worse, be depressed myself by what they say to me? I just won't say anything."

Well, those of you who know Judy know she is not one to remain a stranger to anyone. Her genuine love for other people and lack of guile won't allow her to remain silent, especially in this case, since our two tables were so close. In a few short minutes Judy and Lynn were best friends and it was obvious that Lynn wanted to talk. We learned she was originally from New Jersey and, not too long ago, married a high school sweetheart whose wife had died. They've only been in The Villages a short while after discovering it by "accident." They were living in Arizona and she had been sent out to find a nice place in Florida to call home after retirement. She had just about given up when a lady at a motel in Leesburg asked, "Have you tried The Villages?"... and the rest is history. She said she hadn't known a place like this existed, except in her dreams.

She couldn't get over the friendliness of the people in The Villages. During the time she was looking us over she met several people who immediately asked her over for dinner so they could tell her all about their lives here. Then another couple asked her to come by their house for drinks after her dinner date so they could relate their experiences with this great place. She and her husband Bill have never been busier since they moved here and they love it.

My suspicions concerning chemo were quickly confirmed when Lynn said she was not supposed to be out by herself but as long as she had the strength she was going to go as often as she

could. She smiled quite a lot, between bites of Eggs Benedict, as she told us of her early suspicions, several doctors' consultations, and the ultimate diagnosis of cancer, and of completing her third month of treatment. When asked about the doctor's prognosis she said it was about 50-50 but we saw that her attitude made those odds 75-25 or better in her favor and that she was going to overcome this latest challenge and continuing to plan a fun filled future in her new hometown.

Judy and I told her of our adventures together and how we got together at our 45th high school reunion following the death of both our spouses. We both knew it wasn't just coincidence and looked upon it as a "God thing" and Lynn felt it was the same for her and Bill.

Our breakfast was long gone but our conversation lasted many minutes beyond the last bite because of the friendliness and openness of this person whom had been put into our path and we were reluctant to get up and get on with the day. Seeing a party waiting for available seats prodded us on our way, however, so I gave Lynn our card and asked her to stay in touch and keep us informed on her progress.

As we left she graciously said that meeting Judy and I had made her laugh for the first time in a while and it had been good for her to be with us. We appreciate your comments Lynn but it was your positive attitude and winning smile that made us feel special that God had made it possible for you to be a part of our life on this beautiful sunny morning. Judy and I both thank you for your inspiration to us.

As she got in her car to drive home we were so thankful that we took advantage of another opportunity to be obedient to the giving and receiving of His blessings.

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