

June 2026

# Reflections

## What Do You Do all Day, Grandma?

Finding Purpose and Meaning Throughout Aging

**T**he pandemonium in the home of a pastor-husband, teacher-wife, and their three teenage and preteen girls never seems to stop. On visits, I'd try to help out where I could. There was ongoing laundry and house cleaning, pet care, meals, sports and music practices, tournaments to attend, classroom prep and pastoral duties.

It was in this setting that my 11-year-old granddaughter asked me, "What do you do all day, Grandma?"

I sat and pondered the question. Before retirement, the constant rush of life, accompanied by small emergencies here and there, allowed little time to consider my life's meaning and purpose. But now, having been retired for 7 years, these questions have had time to silently settle over me. I don't miss the hubbub of the pre-retirement years, and I enjoy the freedom of what to

do with my time, but decreasing energy, stiffening joints and the memory games my mind plays with me have a way of slowing down even my retirement activities. So, what do I do all day? How do I still find purpose, meaning and enjoyment in these so-called golden years?

### The Rusty Bucket

The first years of retirement were delightful, accomplishing many things on my bucket list: A condo and boat by the lake, RV road trips, time with my Grandkids, writing and photography projects, volunteering at the Historic Adventist Village in Battle Creek and hiking in Colorado.

But as the years have evaporated since I've retired, it seems my bucket is getting rusty. Changes come >>>



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### At Rest

*Each quarter we publish a list in remembrance of those who have passed to their rest.*

- Aparicio, Rosa R. (FL)
- Archer, Joseph E. (FL)
- Armayer, Arthur, Jr. (ID)
- Bacastow, Donald E. (MD)
- Bailey, Clinelle W. (SC)
- Bailey, Lavada E. (CA)
- Baker, Barbara J. (TX)
- Baldwin, Rosemary E. (VA)
- Ballard, James L. (NC)
- Ban, Gerard C. (TN)
- Barriault, Noretta G. (FL)
- Bascon, Lilia V. (CA)
- Beach, Marilyn G. (IN)
- Bean, Harvey R. (OR)
- Becerra, Enrique (MD)
- Becker, Barbara A. (CO)
- Begley, Bertha Sue (TN) >>>

with aging that make it harder to find things to enjoy. My husband, John, and I have found ourselves arguing then laughing, because our diminished hearing contributes to some hilarious misunderstandings. My 6-mile walk became 5, then 3, and some days only 1 mile.

And thus, I wonder, “What do I do all day?”

### Fixing the Bucket

Depression is a common intruder into the life of a retired person. Grandchildren grow up, friends move away, part time jobs and projects are completed. Trips with family help renew and create closeness and good memories (and photos to help boost your memory). But memories don’t fill the bucket. The way to fix and fill that rusty bucket is by adjusting to the current situation and then finding purpose.

A friend of mine suffered a stroke, which called for a lot of adjustment. She can no longer drive and has to use a cane, but she created and maintains activity bags for children to use during church services. She actively prays with and studies with her neighbors. She helps keep a local lending library stocked. People are happy to take her to church and other events—and she makes the effort to ask. Her backyard is a place where stray cats, turtles, salamanders, birds and squirrels feel at home.

If your activities become mundane, think outside the box. Scour your community for volunteer needs. John volunteered at a racehorse rescue ranch of all things! A sense of accomplishment provides purpose.

### Why Am I Still Here?

Of course, we wouldn’t dare verbalize it but sometimes we wonder if anyone needs us anymore. My family is far away and I miss being a part of their lives, so I’ve decided to be intentional about developing friendships. I now have “families” of friends: the Lunch Bunch, my exercise group, my church, and even a Bunco club. I’ve enjoyed being a greeter at church. It’s a great way to get acquainted and it does a body good to do a lot of smiling, and handshaking with a few hugs thrown in.

It is tempting to not feel appreciated when our contributions of time, energy and talent gradually diminish, but there are still many ways we can help in our church and community. However, the purest meaning and purpose for life do not come from external sources but from internal choices. These internal choices can effectively plug up the hole in the rustiest bucket no matter what the age or circumstances.

My mother was an intelligent and productive woman. When age caught up to her, she volunteered her time doing things such as folding flyers for church meetings, mending donated clothing, or creating gifts of needlework. The time came when she had to leave her home and come halfway across the country to be near me. She couldn’t find much to do for others and she’d say, “Jan, why am I still here?”

This is where faith comes in—a lifetime of faith. Her love for Jesus was contagious. The

### At Rest *(continued)*

Benfield, Robert D. (CA)	Bowes, Carole S. (CA)	Campbell, Marjorie (TN)	Clark, Janet R. (AZ)	Dennis, Daryl A. (OR)
Best, B. Jeannine (MD)	Brooks, Daniel F. (OK)	Campbell, Richard (OH)	Clark, Nina Louise (MI)	Detlor, Glenn R., Jr. (CO)
Bigham, Della D. (OR)	Brougham, Thomas (OH)	Candelaria, Ileana (FL)	Cobb, Janice M. (MA)	Dezotell, Douglas (CA)
Blaine, Joyce K. (TN)	Brown, Brenda J. (MD)	Cansler, Larry J. (NC)	Collins, Ted A. (NC)	Douglas, Robert L. (AL)
Blake, Anna B. (AR)	Brown Vail, Cynthia (TN)	Carlisle, Linda K. (UT)	Cooper, Libby D. (AZ)	Dunbebin, Thomas (WA)
Blakely, Laurence (WA)	Bruan, Lydia R. (CA)	Carreno, Retha J. (MD)	Corderman, Lois (MO)	Dunn, Elizabeth L. (PA)
Boggess, Bennie (OH)	Buckles, Mary Ann (OH)	Chamberlain, David (TN)	Culver, Elizabeth (TN)	Duran, Jacob (CA)
Bolden, Marguriete (LA)	Bucklew, Timothy (MD)	Chan, Lomina (CA)	Cummings, Mary Lou (FL)	Echevarria Gracia, Migdalia (FL)
Borges, Joanne C. (CA)	Burback, Robert (OR)	Christensen, Reba (CA)	Cyphers, Galyn B. (TX)	Eno, Roger G. (MN)
Bowen, Bernard B. (CA)	Burks, Sharon P. (FL)	Chun, Stephen M. (CA)	Daniel, Robert (VA)	Erhard, Darla Rae (TN)
Bowers, Rose (CO)	Burns, John A. (TX)	Church, Davona Gae (TN)	Davis, Vera B. (IL)	Ezpeleta, Mamerta (CA)
		Clarambeau, Florence (FL)	Davis, Verda L. (OR)	Faber, Richard P. (SC)
		Clark, Donna (MI)	Deakin, Norman (FL)	

staff in her assisted care told me that she had the dining room full of residents singing “Jesus Loves Me.” I still treasure the worn 3x5 cards she had typed, with promises such as these:

“Let not the follower of Christ think, when he is no longer able to labor openly and actively for God and his truth, that he has no service to render, no reward to secure. Christ’s true witnesses are never laid aside.” *Acts of the Apostles* 465.2

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses . . . Let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith.” Hebrews 12:1

One day, Mom will see that after her eyes closed for the last time on this earth, God smiled gently at her faithfulness, the angels readied her crown for that resurrection day and the great crowd of witnesses nodded in approval while demons turned away in anger and defeat. Her life had cosmic impact.

The rusty bucket lost its importance. ■

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Facemyer, Kenneth (FL)	Grow, Linda (NC)
Flemmer, Elsie (WA)	Gutierrez, Genoveva (ID)
Flores Morales, Elida (TX)	Haas, Norman (CO)
Frederick, Terry J. (NC)	Hanson, Betty (MI)
Fritsch, Marilyn (CO)	Hare, Marjorie H. (CA)
Fruth, V. Paul (IN)	Harris, Mahlon (WV)
Futcher, Carol M. (MD)	Hartlein, Marion (MD)
Gasser, Larry F. (WA)	Hayes, Yvonne I. (MO)
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Gingery, Shirley L. (CA)	C. Wendell (OR)

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