

Wobbly wanderings

Dear Lord, I called a friend this morning to check to see how she was doing. She said, “Oh, I’m making it but I’ve been furniture walking today.” Furniture walking? I thought she must be feeling great if she was going out to shop for new furniture.

“No, no,” she said. “Did you never hear that expression before?” No, no, I did not. So she explained that when a senior has a wobbly day he or she gets around the house by using the furniture. When you get out of a chair, you reach out to grab onto whatever piece of furniture is nearest and hang on to it. Then you take a couple of steps and reach for the next piece of furniture—small table, chair, desk, whatever. By wobbling along this way, by hanging on to the furniture, you can move through the house—to answer a doorbell, get to the kitchen to fix a snack, or “travel” slowly, wherever you need to go.

My goodness! Maybe everybody is familiar with this expression, but I had never heard it before. On my wobbly days, I have often furniture walked through my house and didn’t know I was doing it.

Yes, some say I seldom know what I am doing, but that's OK. I still get wherever I need to be whenever I need to be there, if I have to travel by cane, car, land, sea, or furniture walking.

Dear Lord, you know that whenever I start to wobble, I usually reach out to grab onto you and hold on for dear life. Unlike the furniture, you are always just where I need you to be. You are just what I need to hang onto in order to wend my way through this strange forest of senior problems, worries, or wobbles.

Thank you, Lord, for your helping hand and for friends who often surprise me with a new expression or idea or helpful hint or a really funny new joke that helps me giggle as I wobble.

An expensive lesson

Dear Lord, I never thought changing a light bulb would cost me \$50, but it did this week. The burned-out bulb was located in a very hard-to-reach area of the house, but when I used to be taller (!), I could climb up a ladder and not-too-easily replace it.

The problem is that this bulb is in a “decorative” container. It’s in a fancy white china thing that looks like a chef’s puffy white hat, and the hat is held on by two tiny screws that, if you dropped them, it would be impossible to ever find matchables for them.

I sent out an SOS to my tall grandson, and he hurried in and immediately dropped one of the screws, which I managed to grab before it went down the drain. He then removed the china “hat,” which I grabbed quickly and placed in a safe place. And then he replaced the old bulb with a brand-new one from a package that had not been opened. The light did not dawn.

The bulb was one of those scrawly new ones that I don’t really trust, so I got out an unopened package of the old-time plain bulbs, and he put

one in. The dawn did not come.

Oh no! I figured it must be a faulty switch, which meant I needed to call a handyman. I called, and he came and looked at the area and asked if he could take the bulb out that was burning brightly in the family room. What? I thought I must have called an *unhandyman*, but he took the family-room bulb, screwed it in where the burned out one had been, and immediately the dawn came. He said, “I’m sorry. You just had two brand-new bulbs that didn’t work. I should have told you to try an old one that was working before you called me, but I didn’t think about it.” And then he gave me his bill for the service call.

Dear Lord, I am going to call all my friends and share with them my lesson learned. I will warn them that even brand-new light bulbs, hermetically sealed in a clear covering, *can* go bad. And I will snicker when I remind them that sometimes an old bulb can burn even brighter than a new untried one. Hooray for seniority!

How to not open sesame

Dear Lord, by the sink in my bathroom, I have two look-alike containers that must be opened by squeezing lightly. One is a miracle cream that you smooth on to look twenty years younger (?!!). The other is my toothpaste. This morning I squeezed one of the containers and lightly spread toothpaste on my cheeks. Immediately a face alert went off, and I quickly soaped off the toothpaste—but my face smelled minty the rest of the day.

I do not need to list this as an aging problem, because I have had many “what did you do now?” events like this in my past. Like many seniors, I have put the trash out on the wrong day, misplaced the car keys, or couldn’t remember how to get to a store whose name I had suddenly forgotten, which might have been OK if only I could have remembered the name of the street where the store is located.

It isn’t bad enough that I have to admit to these small “lapses,” but to add to my frustration, it seems people who design packages keep thinking of ways to keep us from opening them. They have started covering anything and everything you buy

with packaging strong enough to survive an invading enemy attack, making it almost impossible for an unarmed senior to open anything.

Also, “helpful” packagers have started making even dishwashing or laundry more difficult for gentle senior ladies. Unlike my toothpaste, their liquid soap containers come in heavy-to-lift, thick-plastic containers with caps that require you to “squeeze *tightly* and then turn to the right” in order to make the soap ooze out. This is not good news to my Southern, delicate little fingers meant only for lifting a china teacup, with the pinkie finger upright.

Of course, Lord, maybe it’s another one of those “blessings in disguise.” With all these instructions to follow, maybe I will not accidentally pour laundry soap in the dishwasher or try to brush my teeth with the miracle cream. And, Lord, I realize that if I always followed *your* instructions, maybe it would lead to a healthier, happier life, rejoicing in all your blessings in disguise.

Good, better, bad

Dear Lord, I am happy to report that today I am bad.

Yesterday I had gone from bad to worse and I really felt worse—low and slow, grouchy and grumpy, mad and sad. Today I just feel bad, which is good. I feel good enough to get up and do something that needs doing; and while I'm busy, I will forget to feel worse. So as long as I'm bad already, I might as well do something badder. I'll eat a leftover Halloween candy bar. And then I'll probably eat a second one.

I reported this to a friend on the phone, and she immediately ate a candy bar too. Seniors have to stick together.

Unfortunately, even though we feel strong as a group, it seems that if something unpleasant happens to one of us, it goes viral and something starts happening to others in our group. This month a friend's husband ended up in the hospital. By the time he recovered enough to go home, another friend's wife needed leg surgery. Then allergies kicked in and one of the group could hardly speak, and that was the worst, because we couldn't talk on the phone, discussing the prob-

lems of the rest of the group.

Lord, thanks that we still have friends to worry about and share troubles with. Often the best medicine for us is hearing a little joke or a funny story and then sharing it with a friend so we can laugh together. One little story grandparents like is the one about the little boy who rushes up to the teacher's desk, all excited and anxious to tell her, "My grandma is coming to visit us today." The teacher says, "How nice. Where does your grandmother live?" And the little boy says, "Oh, she lives at the airport. Whenever we want her, we just go out and get her."

Or there's the one about the family who had friends in for a fancy dinner, and when they sat down, the sorta frazzled mother asked her little boy to say the blessing. He looked surprised, but his mother urged, "Just say what you've heard Mommy say." And the little boy bowed his head and said, "Dear Lord, why in the world did I invite all these people here for dinner?"

Sorry that I don't have any funnier stories right now, Lord, but maybe that's because today I am bad.