

YOU CAN'T DO THAT ANYMORE

What are you missing the most now that coronavirus restrictions have shut down life as you knew it?

My wife showed me her damaged fingernails last night. I could tell that not getting to visit her longtime nail tech may top the list of what she is missing in these epidemic days. Today as I prepared instant oatmeal for breakfast, I realized that it's been almost a month since I chomped down on a tasty McDonalds sausage biscuit (and got to exchange banter with friends who also start their day there). I'm still well-fed, I assure you, but I miss that morning routine.

All of that is minor stuff, I know. Life goes on just fine while those activities are on hold. But I wonder how I'd be reacting right now if a store my family had opened every business day for several generations suddenly was shuttered. Or how I could cope with the virtual shutdown of air travel if, like my military lawyer son, I was supposed to show up for trials in two or three states every week, but now few planes are flying and lots of the states want to quarantine us when we get there. A lot of us thought air travel had become a hassle to avoid until most of the flights were grounded. Now we miss it.

What do you miss most during these stay-at-home days? Golf course time with your best buddies? Your early morning workout at the gym? Doing face-to-face banking with a friendly teller? Your Saturday morning Bible study? Or greeting your students in the classroom every school day? Most of us probably don't realize how totally we are addicted to the ruts we trudge in until somebody says, "You can't go there or do that anymore."

Early in the virus crisis, even before the more stringent social limits were put in place, my lifelong friend Tom Williams emailed me a short but quite insightful reflection on all of this. He said, "It's a life principle that you don't appreciate what you have until it is lost."

Adam didn't know how good he had it in Eden until he got evicted. Job didn't know how much his ranch and his bank account and his kids blessed him until, almost overnight, they were gone. The prodigal son in Jesus' famous tale was unaware of how good a life his daddy provided him until he had to eat supper from a pig trough.

When the virus rules finally relax (I assure you they will), every time you get to walk through a door that now is shut, every time you again get to do something that the virus now makes illegal, take time to say, "Thank You, Lord," for the ordinary activities that until now you have just taken for granted.