

# Of Grasshoppers and Lady Bugs

In 1994, Jim Gleason of Beverly, New Jersey, underwent a lifesaving heart transplant at the age of 51. He writes about the experience in his book, *A Gift from the Heart*.

After one of the most extreme surgeries imaginable, many asked how it felt to live with a new heart. Gleason's analogy was "like being born again, but with 50 years of memories and experiences built in."

He tells of coming home just 10 days after his transplant. He wanted to go for a short walk around the yard. Accompanied by his daughter, he gazed in wonder at the green grass after weeks of hospital-room walls.



"I stopped walking. 'Look at that!' I exclaimed to Mary. I was pointing to our small maple tree, so vibrant with the colors of that crisp, clear fall day. Then I spied a grasshopper and, like the young child, exclaimed in glee, 'Look at that! A grasshopper!'"

"Her response, in disbelief at my reaction, was an almost sarcastic, 'Well, if that's exciting, look here – a lady bug!'"

After many years with his new heart, Gleason still cherishes life's simple pleasures. And when is the danger of losing that gift greatest?

"As friends and family wish you would return to being *normal*," he reflects, "I struggle to never become *normal* in that sense again."

Considering Gleason's life after his transplant and how he was keenly aware of the beauty of the world around him, the question for you today is: Have you noticed lately the texture and symmetry of the leaves on the maple tree in your front yard? Or the grasshopper or lady bug you encounter?

Or are you so bound by the busyness of life and its challenges that you fail to appreciate the wonder of the world we live in?

With God's help, we, too, can walk in newness of life – no surgery required.

And give thanks that we don't have to be normal.

*I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh (Ezekiel 36:26 NKJV).*

– Beecher Hunter