

## THE ORDER OF THINGS

By John F. Hall

When I first wake up in the morning, I usually receive some inspiration to write a new story. The words in this title came out of nowhere. I wondered how I should start the first chapter? I always seem to fall back on scriptures. They are the best resource a writer can have. In 1 Corinthians, Chapter 14, Verse 40 are these words: “But let all things be done decently and in order.” The order part in that scripture means to do things in a proper sequence and at the right time, rather than in a haphazard and impulsive manner.



I always seem to have music lyrics in my head that I relate to a word like “time.” There is a right time for everything. John Oates and Daryl Hall wrote the song, “Out of Touch.” I’m just going to use some of their lyrics: “Shake it up is all that we know, using the bodies up as we go. I’m waking up to fantasy, the shades all around aren’t the colors we use to see. Broken ice still melts in the sun, and times that are broken can often be one again. We’re soul alone and soul really matters to me. Take a look around. You’re out of touch, I’m out of time. But I’m out of my head when you’re not around. Reaching out for someone to hold. Looking for a love where the climate is cold. Manic moves and drowsy dreams, or living in the middle between the two extremes. Smoking guns hot to the touch, would cool down if we didn’t use them so much, yeah. We’re soul alone and soul really matters to me, too much. You’re out of touch, I’m out of time...”

One lyric in that song, “smoking guns hot to the touch,” reminds me of my time as a machine gunner in the 101st. I would fire off any remaining training ammunition once the live fire exercise was completed; Otherwise, I would have to fill out paper work and explain why the requested ammunition was not used. I carried an extra barrel for the machine gun. When the barrel got red hot from firing thousands of rounds, I used a burn proof glove to remove the barrel that was too hot to touch. I would put in a cool barrel and continue to fire. Several times, when I fired into the trees, the tracer rounds set the woods on fire.

I liked the words found in Psalm, Chapter 31, Verse 15 because they deal with time: “My times are in Your hand; deliver me from the hand of my enemies and from those who persecute me.” When you know that Christ is really in charge of your life, you tend to mellow out. Certainly, when a person reaches my age of 76, nearly all those that persecuted me have gone to the silent earth where all are equal. Money, fame and fortune are meaningless in that silent earth. But kindness is always remembered by those left behind.

Charles Hutchinson Gabriel wrote the hymn, “Many a Soul in The Battle of Life.” These are his lyrics: “Many a soul in the battle of life trembles with fear at the din and the strife, bearing alone, ‘amid trial and care, burdens and sorrows God bids you to share. Many in doubt or in fear of the way, mutely appeal for your guidance today; on your demeanor the

choice may depend-are you concerned for the stranger or friend? Many disheartened by cruel deceit, broken and worn by the pangs of defeat, doubting, despairingly, helplessly stand, waiting, perhaps, for your strengthening hand. Many are turning away from the right into the maze of the shadow of the night; go to them, speak to them, over them pray, help them, support them-do something today. Do something for others, something for others today! Duty demands it, and Jesus commands it! Do something for others today!"

The late writer, Ernest Hemingway would stand up straight at his chest of drawers. He put his typewriter on top of that furniture and he typed out his stories. He had a bad back from being in two plane crashes. Sitting at a table and typing was too painful for him. The tourist that flock to see his former typewriter, in his former house in Key West, Florida, are being misled. They have his typewriter on a table with a chair. The inference is that's where Hemingway typed out his novels.

Several years ago, I decided that the tiny area under the staircase, where I first typed out my stories, did not allow me enough space to put my stories together. I had a desktop computer with the console under the desk, and the keyboard, monitor, and computer mouse on top of the desk. There was no space to put correspondence together. So I moved the computer upstairs into my granddaughter's former room. I put a card table in front of their television set. My son, John gave me back a white desk that I had given the granddaughters.



I planned to put the desk in the room. Like Hemingway, I was standing up straight in front of the girl's chest of drawers. I had a keyboard, 14-inch computer monitor, and a computer mouse on top of that furniture. It was midnight. My wife, Paula was sleeping in our master bedroom downstairs. I wanted to get a letter typed to mail off the next day. I just finished typing when my left hand went numb. Then I lost the use of my left arm. I immediately sat down on a folding chair that went with the card table. I reached for my cell phone. Then I lost the use of my left leg and I fell off the folding chair. The left side of my body was paralyzed. This incident happened about four years ago. I am retelling this story because I was not ready to get onboard that glory train to heaven,

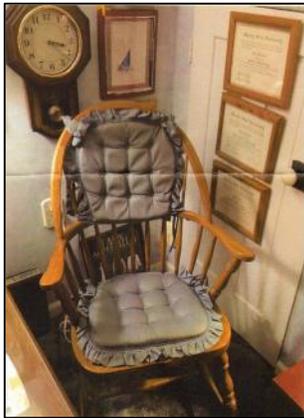


Laying on the carpeted floor, I still did not realized what was happening to me. I kept thinking, "How am I going to crawl down two landings and 19 steps to wake up Paula?" In about five minutes, I regained the use of the left side of my body. I slowly walked down the stairs and woke Paula up. I told her that I was having a stroke and she needed to drive me to the hospital. The last time an ambulance was needed for Paula's mother, it took them 20 minutes to arrive on the farm. We were out of the house in a few minutes and at the emergency room at the Trigg County hospital in less than five minutes. About halfway to the hospital, my left arm was paralyzed again. I

knew the doctor on duty. After some tests, Dr. Thomas asked me what hospital in Nashville I wanted to go to. I knew that Saint Thomas has a good stroke center. I told him Saint Thomas Hospital. I was signing papers in the emergency room at Saint Thomas when I had my 4<sup>th</sup> TIA.

The first day in the hospital the neurologist on duty looked at my chart. He said to me: "Mr. Hall, your prognosis is rather grim." He was expecting a 5<sup>th</sup> TIA that would be the prelude to a major, fatal stroke. He was wrong. One of my one on one nurses told me that they gave me the "million dollar" treatment. A stroke is the number 3 killer in the United States. I was just lucky. I think that Christ keeps me around to write just one more story. Far too many times, I thought that He would give me my ticket to ride that glory train to heaven.

I put two pictures of my former writing area with this story. One picture shows the front view of a chair. Behind the chair is a small door. It is the only original door remaining in my old Antebellum house. On the door is a white door knob. It is 161 years old, the same age of the house. The second picture shows the desk under the staircase. When the Pandemic began, I had already made a correspondence area in front of the girl's television. The third picture shows one of my stories being spread out on the card table. The two Bibles are my resource books. I have an address book that I refer to when I mail my stories to Jade, Lexie, Skyler, Audrey, Trish, Mike and Dr. Butler. The room is 18-feet by 18-feet. The fourth picture shows the white desk where I type my stories.



My granddaughter's Andrea and Heather, when they were little, stayed many days in this old house. Now, as adults, one lives in Louisville and one lives in Nashville. Back in 1860, when the house was built, there was a separate, steep staircase to the girl's room. The room was not accessible from the second floor landing leading to the boys room. There was no, door to the girl's room on the second floor landing. This kept the girls and the boys apart.



My grandfather, John J. Hall, died in the Pandemic of 1918, at the age of 43. All that I have is his picture. I know a few things about him because of research and birth, marriage, and death certificates. To those of my generation, and younger, I recommend that you take the time to write about your life. Even a letter left behind to your kin will be cherished long after you

are gone.

The other day, I was in Dr. Fulbright's office to get an injection of cortisone in my left shoulder to relieve the bursitis pain. I also get an epidural in my spine every four months in Nashville for my spinal stenosis pain. Some days, I feel like the "Tin Man" in the

Wizard of Oz movie. I'm having to oil my joints to keep them from rusting. Writing takes my mind off my pain. It's mental therapy for me. It gives me purpose and it gives me joy. We are going to be judged by the life we have lived and the deeds we have done. I told the nurse, "People that don't have Christ in their lives, don't have a chance of being happy." The order of things, from my window on the second floor of my old house, is to have faith and hope in Christ. Give Him the honor and the glory, and He will give you the grace upon grace upon grace to sustain you.

John F. Hall

\*Read other stories by John F. Hall at: <http://www.ajlambert.com>