

THE MAGIC OF WORDS

By John F. Hall

In Matthew, Chapter 12, Verses 36-37, are these words: “But I tell you that everyone will have to give an account on the day of judgment for every careless word they speak. By your words you will be acquitted, by your words you will be condemned.” I am a nonfiction writer, my stories and articles are based on my experiences and my observations. In my stories I try to be an encourager, a learner, and a mentor. I began the journey as a writer 45 years ago. I felt then, and still do now, that if just one of my stories could help just one person, then my words are not in vain. For it is in helping others that we bring honor and glory to Jesus Christ



Engaging in conversations with family members or friends, gathered around the dinner or restaurant table, is one of my enjoyments of this life. Just being together, talking and laughing in fellowship is food for the soul. Food is life and sharing food is love. My fondest memories of life were made being next to or across the dinning room or restaurant table from my family or friends. Looking into their eyes, and listening to them is love. Just telling them that I love them is food for their souls and for my soul too.

One of my friends, after I gave him one of my stories, told me that he found a run-on sentence in that story. A run-on is a written sentence of two or more main clauses that are not separated by a period or semicolon or joined by a conjunction. I told this friend that I could pay Grammarly a monthly fee to correct my typos, my run-on sentences, and other grammar mistakes. The software company uses artificial intelligence to identify ‘ and correct errors. If I used Grammarly, I would have perfect grammar, free of errors. My issue with using their software is that it checks every word as it is typed on the computer. It is only on my email. One time, I typed a sentence that contained these words: “She was 29 and single.” The software highlighted the word “single,” as if the word was not being used correctly. I ignored the highlight and sent the email. I sent a second identical email and the word “single” was not highlighted. Highlighting a word interferes with the “feel” that I have for the story that I am writing. Grammarly will first use a freemium service where free users are constantly prompted to switch and sign up for a paid subscription that cost \$12 to \$29 a month. It might be helpful to a college student-or a journalist, but not for me.

I don't sell my stories, I just give them away. I proof read my story a few times. This will usually catch about 95 percent of my grammatical errors. Max Lytvn, Alex Shevchenko, and Dmytro Lider founded Grammarly in 2009 with the goal of helping people communicate more effectively. It is an American cloud-based typing assistant. The text-checking software maker is now worth \$13 billion dollars. I never enrolled in a college writing or journalism course. I'm like the piano player that never learned to read sheet music, and plays a melody by hearing it first played. I'm a maverick, Christian writer that loves Christ, and has fear to honor Him in my stories. I don't need an artificial intelligence software to dictate the feel and flow of my stories.

In the winter, I write my stories in the room where my granddaughters, Andrea and Heather spent many days of their early life. I didn't change anything in their room when they moved away. I added two cards tables. On one table I have a laptop and an old iPhone 6. I draft my stories on the iPhone 6. It doesn't have a SIM card. On the other table I keep correspondence items and a Bible that I've had for the past 68 years. Like me, it has seen better days. I watch a TV program called "Coffee, County and Cody. It is hosted by Country Music Disc Jockey Hall of Famer and affable television personality Bill Cody, his producer and sidekick Charlie Mattos and with Kelly Sutton. The show starts every weekday at 7:00 A.M. The three-hour show has country, bluegrass, Americana, Opry cuts, and live studio guests, the latest news, entertaining features, and lively talk about everything from awards shows to zoology. Bill's dad was a Baptist preacher and Charlie is a Catholic. It is interesting to listen to how they mention the differences in the practice of their faith. The show began in 2020 and is aired on Circle TV, WSM-AM and WSMonline.com, and, as Bill Cody says: "Is seen all over the world."

Melodies bring back memories, and such is a song written by Maurice Gibb, Robin Gibb, Barry Gibb called, "Words." These are some of their lyrics: "Smile an everlasting smile. A smile can bring you near to me. Don't ever let me find you down, 'cause that would bring a tear to me. The world has lost its glory, let's start a brand new story now, my love. Right now, there'll be no other time, and I can show you how, my love. Talk in everlasting words, and dedicate them all to me. And I will give you all my life, I'm here if you shall call to me. You think that I don't even mean a single word I say. It's only words and words are all I have, to take your heart away..."

I've travel over a million miles in my careers. I'm a "jack of all trades, and a master of none." Dorothy Coles wrote a short piece called, "I'll Travel." These are her words: "I'll travel the pathway of life, if Jesus holds my hand for the road seems, oh, so rough and oft has sinking sand. At times, when I stumble and fall, with a load of daily care, He's there to help me walk again, and willing my cross to share. And if I reach a bend in the road, He's there to light my way for just beyond the bend, I'm sure, will be a sunny day. And when the sun is shining and the way is free from fear, I talk to Him in whispers, thanking Him for being near. He tells me of His love for me and offers me His hand, and lets me know He's always there to walk the path He's planned."

In my stories, I use a combination of songs hymns and scripture. In John, Chapter 12, Verse 48 are these words: "There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; the very words I have spoken will condemn them at the last day." Lynn Dehazo wrote the hymn, "Ancient Words." These are some of her lyrics: "Holy words long preserved for our walk in this world, they resound with God's own heart; oh, let the ancient words impart. Words of life, words of hope, give us strength, help us cope; in this world where'er we roam, ancient words will guide us home. Ancient words ever true, changing me and changing you; we have come with open hearts, oh let the ancient words impart..." "Holy words of our faith handed down to this age, came to us through sacrifice; oh, heed the faithful words of Christ. Martyr's blood stains each page, they have

died for this faith; hear them cry through the years; heed these words and hold them dear..”.

There is a sad wind of change, according to a study by Pew Research, that while grandparents might have been regular churchgoers, their Children would say they believe in God, but do not go to church regularly. By the time millennial's came round, they had little experience or relationship with church or religion. In 2017, Life Research surveyed young adults aged between 18 and 22 who attended church regularly, for at least a year during high school. The survey results showed that seven out of ten had stopped attending church regularly. One of the reasons given was, that as people moved away from college or started a new job, that made it difficult to attend church. Sometimes, statistics and surveys are misleading. In Ecclesiastes, Chapter 12, Verse 14, are these words: “For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil.” It would seem to me, that giving Christ one hour of their time on Sunday, is not too much for a person to do, regardless of their age.

Gloria Kennedy wrote a short piece called, “Magic Words.” These are her words: “Lord, give me a magic pen that writes sweet words from beginning to end; that tells great stories, strong and bold, of exciting people, young and old. Let the magic come into my mind, and all my words be clear and kind, a touch of mystery to hold the crowd, with words of wisdom to make You proud. Let me write of love, and eyes that shine, a strong belief in our mankind, know all that's bad, is not the rule, when, 'Love Thy neighbor,' is our tool. Let 'my words touch the weary heart, and give them hope, as they depart. May I listen to the songs of those in doubt and help them see what life's about. If just one soul I chance to save with words of joy and hope I gave, then I know You have heard my prayer, I thank You God, for being there.”

Many years ago, I was asked to speak to the students at Heritage Christian Academy (HCA) during one of its Chapel Services. I talked about verbal bullying. Since I was a volunteer in the HCA lunchroom, for over 10 years, I felt that the students would not, seriously, listen to what I had to say. I was known to the students, teachers, and staff, as “An-Father.” I would give the students a peppermint in exchange for having them cite their favorite Bible verse. I decided to disguise my identity. I put on a Judge's robe, a wild white wig, and a white beard. I even disguised my voice to sound like an Irishman. I told the students that the old children's rhyme of “sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me,” was not true. I said that words can be very hurtful, and very harmful. I told the students that words can cut like a knife. But I also mentioned that words can be very helpful. They can give comfort in a time of grief or sickness. Words can make a person feel loved. As found in John, Chapter 13, Verse 34, “A new command I give you: love one another. As I have loved you, so must you love one another.” There is magic in the words: “I love you.”

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*Read more stories written by John F. Hall and others at: <http://www.ajlambert.com>