

## ONE DAY AND ONE STEP

John F. Hall

In this story, I refer to a stairway, or stairs, or staircase with a hymn, a poem, and in my old house. I allude to life being what we have to climb each day. I begin in my house. I opened the west window, a few inches, in my second floor bedroom, and turned on the fan to blow in some fresh air. Over the top of my laptop, I'm looking out the north window at the maple tree across the road. The leaves have turned a brilliant yellow and gold. To get to the second floor, I first climb 16 steps to the first landing, and then another six steps to the second landing which is the second floor. My right leg has been causing me problems going back to when I was a 17-year old paratrooper. After parachuting out of helicopters and planes, I would always let my right foot hit the ground first, before executing the parachute landing fall (PLF). And running for miles in combat boots, for over 30 years, just added to the injury.



My right foot was operated on twice by Orthopedic Surgeon, Dr. Jeffery Herring. A Vanderbilt surgeon told me that I was not a candidate for foot surgery as my right foot circulation is inadequate. I think that surgeon lacked the expertise to tackle the job. Sadly, the first two surgeries failed after about six months. Dr. Herring wanted to do a third surgery that involves breaking four toes in my right foot and inserting a six-inch pin in each toe. I would be bedridden for nine days and not able to drive for six weeks. I declined the surgery. I knew my running days were behind me. To add insult to injury, the sciatic nerve that runs from my lower back to my right foot is causing me intense pain. I use a recently developed acupressure wrap on my right leg calf that reduces the sciatic pain. And my right leg knee joint is also giving me pain. I wear a knee brace to reduce that pain. But I'm 77 and on the downhill slide to 78. But I'm blessed to still be here, and I'm living, one step at a time, and one day at a time.

One day, I decided to do something different. I decided not to wear the knee brace and to climb the stairs, one step at a time. I would use my left leg, and my left hand on the stair railing, to raise up to the next step. The pressure would mainly be on my left leg. I would raise my right leg to the step occupied by my left leg, and just use it to balance me. It takes me a little longer to go upstairs, but taking one step at a time works for me. Justin Farley wrote a poem called, "One Step at a Time." These are his words: "A spiral, wooden staircase reaches up like crooked branches - oak fingers, determined to touch the sky. Stairs with ornate, hand-carved railings make way for impossible feats and give Wingless creatures a chance to fly. And I stand humble before them, wondering where they lead and high they climb. A thousand steps is too many, but one step at a time seems possible if I keep my head level and eyes blind. Every journey begins distant -- hard, unfathomable, unimaginable, while peering across the sands of time. But complacency is a curse that stands ready with force to defend comfort in the battle of the mind. Life is one continuance climb. Each day one step closer to the potential written in your heart. No need for giant leaps or desperate measures destined for defeat, but you must find somewhere to start. Progress comes to those who push onward, planting seeds even when

tired and a day off is a tempting reward...”. “For excuses quickly become reasons to idly watch months go by without a step forward. It's the small choices you make compounded over a lifetime that leave you in the plains or push you to the peak. At the end of life's journey, the number of seeds you've sown determines the character you reap.”

I was looking for a song that deals with walking step by step. My Christian Fraternity Brother, Bill Rush has a problem with one of his legs. I saw him using a cane the other day and I liked how it looked. We began a conversation that began with me finding out where he purchased the cane. Our Christian Fraternity meets on the second floor of an old house. It is about 19 steps up to the first landing, and another seven steps up to the second floor. One day, I may not be able to climb the steps to that second floor. Albert B. Simpson wrote a song called, “Tis So Sweet to Walk With Jesus.” These are his lyrics: “Tis so sweet to walk with Jesus, step by step and day by day; stepping in His very footprints, walking with Him all the way. Step by step, step by step, I walk with Jesus, all the day, all the way, keeping step with Jesus. 'Tis so safe to walk with Jesus, leaning hard upon His arm. Step by step I'll walk with Jesus, just a moment at a time, heights I have not wings to soar to, step by step my feet can climb. All the way I'll walk with Jesus, through the sunshine, through the gloom, through his blood-marked steps may lead me to the garden to the tomb. Here awhile we walk with Jesus, but time will not be long, till the night shall change to morning, and the sorrow into song. Then, with all that walk with Jesus, we shall walk with Him in white, while He turns out grief to sadness, and- our, darkness into light. Jesus keep me closer-closer, step by step, and day by day; stepping in Thy very footprints, walking with Thee all the way.”

Looking back, when I led in the Army's two-mile physical fitness run, when I ran as fast as I could, I miss being able to do that today. I miss those early morning runs, and watching the morning sun. Charles Widmetyer wrote the song, “When I've Run The Race Before Me.” These are just a few of his lyrics: “When I've run the race before me and have fought to victory, I'll be raptured to-the glory of the Lord; when I've kept the faith at any cost, the Holy City then I'll receive as my reward...”.

I spent one week in the Mohave Desert near China Lake, California, when I was a soldier. The sand in the day time was almost too hot to touch. The barren mountains seemed inhospitable to me. One time I had to fast walk ten miles in that hot desert sand. It was getting harder and harder to take one more step. The 110 degree temperature, the burning hot sun, and carrying a 23-pound machine gun, nearly did me in. I think, that when Jesus Christ spent 40 days and 40 nights in the desert, that might have spent some of the time in a cool mountain cave. I thank Christ for every day for all the gifts, loved ones, grace upon grace, and inspiration that He has given me. And I take it, one day and one step at a time.

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\*Read other stories by John F. Hall and others at:  
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