

REVERENCE IN MY STORIES

By John F. Hall



Several of my friends suggested that I write a book. I'm no novelist like F. Scott Fitzgerald, or Earnest Hemingway, or even Kentucky's Jesse Stuart. It was never my purpose to become that kind of writer. I started writing life stories in 1977. The purpose was my hope that one of my stories might help just one person. I did not set the bar very high because I was not sure if anyone would enjoy reading what I wrote. I give reverence to Jesus Christ in my stories. It might be lyrics from a hymn, or words from a poem, or scripture. In Psalms, Chapter 2, Verse 11, are these words: "Serve the Lord with reverent fear and rejoice with trembling." Bernard Asuncion wrote a poem called, "Reverence." These are his words: "Having a high regard for the Lord lets a prayer be heard by God. Obedience to his commands, even during troubles, is quite important. He shall be with true servants through the storm."

It is just a fact, that all that I have and all that I can be, I owe to Jesus Christ. In spite of typing this story, sitting in my wheelchair, with an uncomfortable back brace on, at my kitchen table, I feel that I can still fulfill the purpose, that I began by writing nonfiction stories, 47 years ago. I don't write fiction stories. I restricted my life stories to those events that I have experience or observed. As my granddaughter, Andrea, said to me, "You are the only writer, that I know, who mentions God in your stories." It was one goal. of my mine to just leave my stories to Andrea when my time on earth was over. It was in asking for help on a story, that I became friends with. Mrs. Audrey Lambert. She surprised me by putting my stories on her web page: ajlambert.com.

I was a surrogate grandfather to Lexie and. Skyler Crisp, when their dad, Captain Jason Crisp was deployed to Iraq. And to Jade Barkman, who sat with me, every Sunday for ten years, at the church I attend, until her parents moved to Russellville, Kentucky. When COVID hit, and the government foolishly shut down the churches and the schools, I felt inspired to try to write one story a week and mail it to them. Andrea is now married to Andrew Jansen, and Skyler is now married to Kendall Lancaster. I still. mail. my stories to them.

In addition to Audrey Lambert, I mail my stories to my doctor, Daniel Butler, to Dru Thomas; granddaughter, Heather Hall, church member Trish Cunningham, and to my friend Ted. Lester. At Sunday church service, I give my stories to Rev Gregory Trawick, Mrs. Marie Bruzewski, Mrs. Nancy Thomas, Mrs. Linda Copeland, and Norman Geist. I email my stories to my Christian Fraternity Brother, Richard Hornbeak. He batch emails them to our other fraternity brothers.

I worked for the Kentucky Department of Revenue from 2000 to 2007. During tax season, I would electronically file state and. federal income taxes for the public. One day, an employee from the local Social Security office, came by to have his taxes filed. He said to me: "John, when you turn 62, start drawing your Social Security. If you wait until

you turn 67, the average number of checks that you will draw is 17, before you die. So I followed his advice. I've drawn 192 checks so far. So there is something to what the man told me. I don't know why waiting an additional five years, to draw, has such an impact on people's longevity. George Washington, Leonardo da Vinci, Catherine the Great, Woodrow Wilson, Ingrid Bergman, Spencer Tracy, Liberace, to mention a few, all died at the age of 67.

One can say that writing gives me the opportunity to show reverence for Jesus Christ, and to leave behind stories about my family and my friends. A few things made it possible for me to write about so many things. The first is my faith in Christ. If it was not for His grace upon grace upon grace, and His inspiration, I would not have the talent to write. That gift comes from Him. Having a college education helped. But it was the dozens of jobs and six careers that gave me things to write about.

Along that broken road, I made enemies, and people that just did not like me. In John, Chapter 13, Verse 34, are these words: "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so must you love one another." In Matthew, Chapter 6, Verse 14 are these words: "For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you." I do think about those people who treated me so badly. But I also know that I cannot forgive them, when I am dead and six feet under a tombstone. So now is the time to forgive them, both the living and the dead. But it takes help from Christ. It's not like I can snap two fingers and it is done. In Matthew, Chapter 18, Verses 21-22, are these words: "Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?" Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times." I say, "Forgive those who sinned against me, as I forgive them." Let the Heavenly Father judge them.

I'm blessed to have family and friends who care about me, and who love me. It matters to them that I'm still in this world. Bernie Taupin wrote the song, "Our Song." These are just a few of his lyrics: "I hope you don't mind, I hope you don't mind, that I put down in words, how wonderful life is while you're in this world...". I'll end this story with 1 Corinthians, Chapter 15, verse 58: "Therefore, my brothers and sisters, stand firm, let nothing move you. Always give your self fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain."

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