

STORIES ABOUT TIME

By John F. Hall

I spend a lot of my time drafting and writing stories. You might say that, in addition, to being my passion, it is my productive use of my time. We know that our years pass quicker, as we get older. We watch, as years fly and many of our family and friends die.



I, for one, regret not knowing when they will say their last goodbye's. Today's memories sometimes fade away with time. I can write many things about time. It is something that we never have enough of. I'm sitting here at my laptop computer and looking out the window. It's a sunny day. On top of my closed record player is a battery operated alarm clock, to remind me of the time. The window air conditioner automatically turns on. I also have a small electric fan on the record player, to help circulate the cool air. The phone rang, earlier. The message on the answering machine was from Fort Campbell. It was a reminder that I have prescriptions ready to be picked up. I plan to pick them up, the Good Lord willing, tomorrow. Some times we spend time thinking about things that we would forget. It's true that time waits for no one.

No matter what each of us endures, time keeps marching on. That, in reality, our greatest struggle, in life, is our struggle against time. Time becomes more clear as we grow old. As time passes, we think of what we have learned, what we have been taught, and what we have forgotten. Time has always been there. Time is forever changing, and it is never the same as it was before. Time, when we have it, we don't use it wisely. We waste time thinking we will have it forever. Time is not our enemy or our friend. We wish we had more time, when our time runs out.

Joe Massocco wrote a poem called, "Time." Rather than quote his words, I will use a comment made about his poem, by an unnamed young man. These are his words: "Although I'm only 26 years of age, I feel as if time is no longer on my side. My family gets smaller as the years pass. I no longer have any grandparents, and the rest of the family rarely talks or gets along. I'm sure each reader thinks about how they really wish they appreciated their youth more, but we can't stop time; we can only cherish it." Jerry Ragovoy and Norman Meade wrote the song, "Time Is On My Side." The problem, with the premise of that song, is that time is not on our side. All of us are allotted just so much time to accomplish things in this life.

In the late 1980's, my wife, Paula and I went to an estate sale. We made several bids on an old wall clock that once belonged to Paula's grandmother, B. M. Towler. Paula called her "Big Mother." We won the bid for the clock that was not working. The front glass of the wall clock opens up so it can be re-round. There is a round key hole by the Roman number, "VIII," and another key hole by the number, "III," on the face of the clock. The same key fits into the hole that controls the pendulum and the chimes. The other key hole controls the time spring. The key is kept inside the pendulum , compartment, below the face of the clock. I had the wall clock fixed, years ago, at a clock repair shop that once

was in the Post Exchange on Fort Campbell. The repair did not last for more than a few months. And the repair shop no longer exists.

I suspect that the clock repairman was unable to make a long lasting repair part. I was able to approximate the age of the wall clock, within 100 years. Between 1720 and 1830, the Roman numeral "IV" was replaced with the numeral "IIII," to indicate the number 4. Because the wall clock has the numeral "IIII," the clock was manufactured sometime during the years 1720 to 1830. The wall clock is mounted on the wall in my dining room. On birthdays, holidays, and other special occasions, my family and close in-laws come to celebrate in the dining room. It is a tradition that we have kept since we moved into the Antebellum house in 1978. The large dining room table can accommodate 12 people. Twice a day, the silent wall clock, shows the correct time.

Rachel Harnett wrote a poem called, "Take The Time." These are her words: "Take the time, enjoy a sunrise, pink clouds brightening the sky, fragrance from a lovely garden where roses please the eye. Take the time, enjoy all Nature - it is always worth your while. You'll be grateful for the beauty that will cause your heart to smile. Take the time to show a kindness - just a drop you give today has a special kind of sweetening that can help in many ways. There is magic in each droplet - you will know that this is true; for a portion of its magic will return to sweeten you. Take the time to travel slower, enjoy each moment that you live, then you'll really know the fullness of the blessings God can give."

Paul Sebastian wrote a poem called, "Cherish Loved Ones." These are his words: "Cherish own precious loved ones. Find moments to touch their hearts. Relish chanced engaging chit-chats. Never put-off to another day's start, for tomorrow could be just too late. If music beats in your heart, sing it to heart's full blast. Like the birds do at every sunrise, whistle or hum a tune you prize. Let music fill the home air, lift spirits, raise a joyful flair. Shy not away, morrow's too late. If feet itch to dance, dance! Let loved ones watch you dance. Save not hugs only for a special day, love hugs, freely give everyday. Let glow within show in your smile! Your presence moment felt worthwhile! If kindness is deserved for a kin, do not stow deeds, in heart's cabin. Selflessly share love, while you may. If there's a birthday to celebrate, some loving-kindness to relate, some love-mending words waiting to say, speak them now, not put off for someday. Nor pour late guilt-tears, on funeral day. Regrets swarm many days for such delays. Some roses you wanted to present, do it now! Hearses-ful roses are too late, then! Why live the rest of your life, to relent? Better, savor moments, while you can! Your stay in this world is a short one, treasure your loved ones!"

Next month, I will celebrate, the Good Lord willing, my 78th birthday. Walt Underwood, a fellow writer, is 78, and we agree on certain things. We agree that to cherish someone is to let them know through your intentional actions. My intentional acts, at this stage of my life, is to mail my stories and brief letters to people that I cherish and love. A Preacher once said: "God's Word has stood the test of time because it is divinely inspired by Almighty God. It cannot be erased by any person, religion, or belief system. Amen to that. Now I need to find someone that can fix my antique wall clock, so I can keep track of time, while I'm in my dining room.

John F. Hall

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