

STAYING USEFUL AND CREATIVE IN THE TWILIGHT OF LIFE

By John F. Hall

Some people feel that life after 75 is not worth living. Their argument is that there are not that many people who continue to be active and engaged and actually creative past the age of 75. I will turn 76 this month of June, and I don't fit into



their cookie cutter model. Chuck Cleaver, David R. Morrison, John Earnhardt, and Randy Cheek wrote the song "Live Until I die." These are some of their lyrics: "Skippin' rocks, skippin' rope, laughin' at all my best friend's jokes. Things I loved when I was a kid, muddy roads, muddy feet. I didn't live on no blacktop street. Things have changed a lot but I never did. Livin' right, livin' in this little old town I grew up in. But I still held on to my dreams. Standin' proud, standin' smack dab in the middle of it all.

I don't worry 'bout things I can't change. And everything around me are things I dearly love. And every night I get down on my knees and thank the Lord above. And I don't want to think about tomorrow. I don't need anything money can buy. I don't have to beg, steal, or borrow. I just want to live until I die...".

I will concede that Father time has been a little hard on this worn out old body of mine. Thankfully, I have not suffered any cognitive decline or mental confusion. I do suffer from chronic back pain, it may have been caused when I was a paratrooper and jumped out of perfectly good airplanes and helicopters. I'd crash into trees at night and have some really bad landings in the day time. We were not supposed to jump when the wind got up to 12 miles per hour. One time, the wind gusts were 15 to 20 miles per hour, but we had to jump anyway. I got dragged some that day. I hurt my back. The medic gave me some aspirin and gave me bed rest for three days.

Jade, Lexie, Skyler, Trish, Audrey, Mike and Daniel still like me to mail them my stories. Sometimes I tend to work on a story too long. I restrict my writing to nonfiction stories of things that I have experienced or observed. I mowed part of the front yard this morning. I knew the rain was coming, but I wanted to get something done before it hit. My wife, Paula called out and said that breakfast was ready. I asked if she would bring it to the front porch because my boots were muddy. I sat on the front porch swing and looked out at the fields of corn. You could almost hear it growing with all the daily rain we've had. I told Paula that the frogs must have had a concert in the pond last night. They sure were loud. About the time I finished my scrambled eggs and my Florida orange juice, it started to rain. I had to run to get the self-propelled lawn mower and then drive the riding mower under the small roof at the entrance to the well house.

As a Christian writer, I give Jesus Christ honor and glory and I stand with Him alone. The reason for this is that His grace upon grace upon grace sustains my creative writing. I'm old school and I believe that people should make a difference in the lives of other people. To have friends, one needs to be a good friend first. To be loved, one must give love first. You cannot make people like or love you if they don't want to. Nor should you

foolishly believe that you can change a person or mold that person into something that they do not want to become.

Staying useful allows a person to continue to be creative. One has to see beyond his selfish needs and desires and try to help future generations mature. This involves enjoying the company of others when we are not at the head of the table. It involves the blessings of performing everyday tasks and attending routine events and basking in the joys of memories. Wisdom involves the appreciation of happiness gained from kindness, generosity, shared wisdom, unselfish love, a walk with a cane in a beautiful garden. I'm not having to use a cane yet. I still get up stairs to my second floor where I do all my writing, when it is too cold or too hot to sit on my front porch swing.

My peers like me to email them some of my stories. So far, none of my Christian Fraternity Brothers have thrown any tomatoes at me. So I guess I'm doing alright. Those words came from a song titled "Lonely Weekends" I liked to hear Charlie Rich sing that song. He was 63 when he passed away. Music is in my soul when I write. Back in 1893, Daniel S. Warner wrote the song, "There's Music in My Soul." These are some of his lyrics: "Since I have found my Savior, bowed to His control; there's everlasting music ringing in my soul. I sing of my Redeemer, happy in the way; He sweetly tunes the spirit, singing all the day. I love to sing the story, Jesus makes me whole; for I can feel His glory singing in my soul. Since I have been translated, heaven's anthems roll; in sweet accord with joyful music in my soul. The angels sing in heaven, let the praises roll; there's music in creation, music in my soul..".

I have written more true stories in the past year and a half, than I have written in the past 42 years. In 2 Corinthians, Chapter 12, Verse 9 are these words: "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." "Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me." Staying creative and useful in the twilight of life is a gift of grace upon grace upon grace, freely given by Christ that loves all of us.

John F. Hall

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