

My Thoughts On Being Old

John F. Hall

*Read other stories by John F. Hall and others at: <http://www.ajlambert.com> In this story, I share my thoughts on being old. I share some things that have helped me to remain independent, and to have some quality of life. Christ has blessed me with my wife, Paula Andree. For more than 60



years, she has stood by my side, and she continues to care for this old man. When I flip the hour glass, in the second floor bedroom of my very old farmhouse, I know that the grains of sand, will take one hour to flow down from the top bulb to the bottom bulb. I know that Moses, one of the most important prophets to have ever lived, was right, that if my strength endures, I will live to be 80 years old. I also know that as long as, Jesus Christ, continues to give me His grace upon grace upon grace, and His inspiration, that I will continue to write my nonfiction life stories. I may not know Christ's purpose for me, until Judgment Day. I'm somewhat like the Kentucky writer, Jesse Stuart. He once said: "I live to write." I just enjoy writing my stories. Once I finish a story, I'll start working on another story.

When I started this story, I forgot Jesse's last name. I would describe it as a "senior moment." It only lasted for a few minutes, and I had to think very hard to remember his last name. I had a similar problem, more than a decade ago. I could not remember country singer Alan Jackson's name. Paula and I had been to his concerts in Louisville, Kentucky, and in Nashville, Tennessee. I had five minor strokes in 2016, that wiped out some of my memory cells. Once I remembered Jackson's name, I did what I call a six-time memory synapse. I would slowly say Alan Jackson's name, six times. This created new memory synapses in my brain. It worked because I can instantly recall his name. One of the things, that I am still able to do, in spite of my frail and weak physical condition, is to write my stories. I sincerely appreciate Audrey Lambert, and her husband, Mike, for putting many of my stories on her web page, ajlambert.com.

I mentioned, in a previous story, that my doctors did not want me to walk up to the second floor of my house to write my stories. They are concerned that I might lose my balance and fall down the steps. So I had my desktop computer, monitor, and printer, moved to my kitchen table. It's where I now write my stories, and eat my meals. I sit in my wheelchair that gives me some back support. I have a large kitchen window that allows me to look down Dyers Hill Road. I'm frail, and I'm weak, but I still have enough strength, to walk out my kitchen door, and to walk to and from my mail box, that is in front of my house. I'm a greeter at the small church that I attend. I sit in a transport chair, and I welcome the people as they come in the church door. I briefly help with the church offerings. It's an aging congregation, the majority are grandparents. We have a few young families.

It's about all that I can do, to drive from my house to the church. I sit in the transport chair for about two hours. I'm about spent, after the church service. I drive home, take off my Sunday suit, take a pain medication, and lay down in my bed. I've suffered five compression fractures in my spine. I had three fractures corrected by surgeries, the surgeon felt that my body might heal the remaining two fractures. The problem is that my bones are becoming brittle.

A few years ago, I thought about some things that might help this old man, to remain independent. I purchased a wheel chair. I had my son, John, construct a wheelchair ramp up to my deck. That allows me to gain access to the inside of my house from the deck. I got rid of my cast iron tub. I had my son put in a walk-in shower. I had a railing put on the side of the steps, from my kitchen door, leading down to my carport. I purchased a stand-up rollator, for several reasons. I use it to help me to get into and out of my bed. I sit in the rollator seat when I shave. I put it next to my shower door, to help my balance getting in and out of the shower. The most important improvement that I made to the walk-in shower, was to have my son put in a 36-inch stainless, vertical steel grab bar, in the back wall of the shower. It is the first thing that I grab, for balance, when I get in and out of the shower. I use the rollator as I walk from room to room. I call it my aid-decamp. I'm five months beyond the age of 80, and falls kill one in four people my age.

My thoughts on being old are influenced by my faith in Jesus Christ. In Ephesians, Chapter 4, Verses 22-24 are these words: "You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, to be like God in true righteousness and holiness." My thoughts in this matter are to stay in God's good graces. And not to be corrupted by the immoral filth found in movies, in the internet, and other forms. I am not fooled by Satan. He is real and he goes about the world seeking the ruin of souls.

In 1932, Gene Autry and Jimmy Long wrote the song, "That Silver Haired Daddy of Mine." My hair is white with age, and I can relate to this song. These are Gene's and Jimmy's lyrics: "In a vine covered shack in the mountains bravely fighting the battle of time, is a dear one who's weathered my sorrows, 'tis that silvered-haired daddy of mine. Oh it's too late, dear old daddy, to repay all those sorrows and cares. Though dear mother is waiting in heaven, just to comfort and solace you there. If I could recall all the heartaches, dear old daddy, that I've caused you to bear. If I could erase the lines from your face, and bring back the gold to your hair. If God would but grant me the power, just to turn back the pages of time. I'd give all I own if I could atone to that silver-haired daddy of mine."

Some other thoughts on being old, I find in scripture and in a hymn. In John, Chapter 3, Verse 16, are these words: "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life." That verse has kept this old man, grounded. As to a hymn, it is "Jesus Loves Me." It was written in 1859, by Anna Bartlette Warner. She lived with her family in an old ramshackled Revolutionary War-era farmhouse on Constitution Island, near West Point, New York. Neither Anna Bartlette or her sister, Susan married. They held Bible Studies for the West Point cadets. When the cadets were on military duty, the cadets would sing, "Jesus Loves Me." Both sisters were buried with military honors because of their contributions to the spiritual well being of the soldiers. They are the only civilians buried in the West Point Cemetery. These are Anna Warners lyrics: "Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so. Little ones to Him belong; they are weak, but He is strong. Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes Jesus loves | The Bible tells me so. Jesus loves me He who died heaven's gate to open wide. He will wash away my sin, let His little child come in. Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes Jesus loves me! The Bible tells me so. Jesus loves me, this I know, as He loved so long ago, taking children on His knee, saying let the children come to Me. Yes, Jesus loves me! The Bible tells me so."

I'll end this story with a poem by Walter Safar, called, "The Old Man." These are his words: "How many wishes and hopes pass through a man's mind? This is what I am think about while looking into the sad face of an old man who is motionlessly staring into the distance, as if down there, in the blue eye of the dreamy sea he shall find all the answers. And while the turquoise hands of the moon drive the shadows into the old man's embrace. A turquoise butterfly merrily flaps its wings and radiates rays of this warm summer night above his trembling tired head. Perhaps this is the reason why the old man's sad face looks up in stead of down, why the sparkle of life still glows in his tired eyes. This butterfly is very young, but his noble parentage is very old, and that noble parentage use to spread its turquoise light in the times of the old man's parents and grandparents, back in the time when hope was born (and people say that hopes are younger than solitude). It seems that the old man feels it, and he raises his tired eyes whenever he hears the harmonious sound of the turquoise wings, and death, like a dark lady, respectfully waits for its turn, as if it took pity on the old man's boyish gaze; how many wishes and hopes pass through a man's mind while he hopelessly sits and waits for death? I wonder where his thoughts are traveling now and which soul they touch? His mother's soul, his father's soul? His brother's and sister's souls? Because souls are like butterflies, crawling the earth with people. Only to eventually fly up to the sky, perfectly free and magically bright. All of this must be passing through the old man's thoughts while he looks at the turquoise butterfly."

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