

TAKING ON LIFE AS IT IS

By John F. Hall

Regardless of the type of music that you like, most music can be up lifting if it has a good message and a good beat. I for one, like both country and old fashion rock and roll music. Morten Harket, Pat Waaktaar, and Mage (mags) Furuholmen wrote a song titled “Take



On Me.” It has a great beat, but there is one word in the song that contradicts common sense: “It’s no better to be safe than sorry.” The writers should not have included the word “no.” It is better to be safe than sorry when you are taking on life as it is. These are some of their lyrics: “Talking away, I don’t know what I’m to say. I’ll say it anyway, today is another day to find you. Shying away, I’ll be coming for your love, okay?...So needless to say, I’m odds and ends but I’ll be stumbling away, slowly learning that life is okay. Say after me, it’s no better to be safe than sorry. Take on me, take on me. I’ll be gone in a day or two. Oh, things that you say. Yeah, is it life or just to play my worries away. You’re all the things I’ve got to remember. You’re shying away, I’m coming for you anyway.. .”.

In Mark, Chapter 6, Verse 4, are these words: Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown, among his relatives and in his own home.” That can also be said about some writers. It can be said about this writer. My dear wife, Paula, truly believes that I waste my time writing stories. But I am taking life as it is. I mainly use my writing to mentor three young people. I do get some satisfaction when a person my age sends me a card saying they enjoy reading my stories. Writing is therapeutic and enjoyable for me. I’m under no time pressure to produce a story. Yet I feel a sense of accomplishment if I can write one story a week.

Some of the ingredients that I put into my stories are rather simple. I use a combination of song lyrics, scripture, and short pieces that other people write. For example, Frances Culp Wolf wrote a short piece titled “A Safe Dwelling Place.” These are her words: “There is a dwelling place of safety found in God Who reigns above; a place where anyone can enter, receive protection and God’s love. If you have a need or burden, bring it to Someone Who cares. God will meet your need and comfort, remove doubts and hidden snares. God will cause our fear to vanish; if we seek his face. We should look to Him for guidance; He will help us in Life’s race. God will grant us untold blessings; upon our path He’ll send a light. All we have to do is follow, keeping Him within our sight. Read God’s holy Word with patience, asking Him to instruct our way. We should also pray for power and obey Him from day to day.”

Joe Babcock wrote the song “One Day at a Time.” It seems to me, anyway, that song writers are, in fact, the best story writers. These are some of his lyrics: “Life has dealt us our fair share of pain along the way. And many dreams have withered on the Vine. But dreams are all such fleeting things and happiness is now. We’ll just live our lives one day at a time. In all the stormy weather love has seen us through. Happiness is knowing you’re mine. Why worry about tomorrow for tomorrow may not come. We’ll just live our

lives one day at a time. Just one thing I'm learning you take life as it comes... Each day is a gift so don't be blind. Tomorrow may bring gladness or a little bit of sadness. We'll just live our lives one day at a time. We may not have a fortune making plans to change the world. We may leave little marks in life's design. But as long as we're together every hour is filled with love and we'll live our lives one day at a time..."

I happen to believe that one person can make a difference in the lives of other people. I admit that sitting on my front porch swing and admiring God's creation may be as good as life gets. As the title of this story "Taking on Life as it is" suggests, I did not want the reader to assume that I am living a stress free life in the middle of the widow's farm. About 680 miles from Cadiz is the city of Dallas, Texas. Working inside a tall office building is a man named John T. Stankey. He is the CEO of AT&T and he earns about \$22 million dollars a year. We have never met and he may know very little about me.

One of Mr. Stankey's goals is to eliminate all the old copper phone lines in Kentucky. It just happens that I have an old phone line. All of his inducements, to me, to give up my old phone line have failed. I will not bundle my services with AT&T, nor will I drop Dish TV and sign up for AT&T's Direct TV. So one can conclude that Mr. Stankey, in his tall ivory tower in Dallas, Texas, is not a happy camper. So to force the issue, Mr. Stankey, because he controls a massive telecommunications facility, elected to harass me into surrendering my old copper phone line. I'm not sure that Mr. Stankey knows that I'm an old Vietnam War Veteran. I have issues from that war and from being a first responder, so he had his minions initiated psychological warfare against me.

His minions would use stealth technology and call my home phone. They would activate phone numbers that were disconnected, out of service, or not working phone numbers. They call and not say anything, or have a loud noise. Then they would disconnect the number. I have a cell phone with unlimited calling, and I would return the call and discover that the number was disconnected, out of service, or not a working number. In addition, because I have Dish TV' Caller ID, I would have the incoming call information displayed on my flat screen TV. I would take a picture of the on-screen information.

As credit bureaus some times do, a mistake was made that indicated incorrect information when my wife, Paula decided to buy a new car. One of my life insurance companies was hacked and my personal information was stolen. So the insurance company put a freeze on my three credit reports. AT&T, apparently was given incorrect information, and assumed that I was in financial distress. AT&T decided that it would make the cost of maintain my home phone line too costly. But it crossed the line and engaged in wire fraud. All stories normally have a beginning, a middle, and an end. I cannot say this about Mr. Stankey. I know just enough about the law to take him on. I also have to be realistic about life as it is. AT&T can spend millions of dollars defending itself with high priced lawyers. And it can drag out litigation for decades. As for me, I sing the words to the song: "one day at a time, sweet Jesus, that is all I'm asking of You." To be brutally honest, I did not know how to take on Mr. Stankey.

Through out my life, I have prayed, “Jesus, please help me.” One day, sitting in my easy chair, I fell off to sleep. In a dream three words came to mind: harass, out of state, and disclosure. At the time, the words meant nothing to me. But I did some research and discovered two federal laws that I could use against Mr. Stankey. If you are driving in the Land Between the Lakes, and you get a speeding ticket, you have to go to the Federal Court House in Paducah, Kentucky to pay the fine.

One day I called the Federal Court and talked to a deputy clerk. She told me how to go on line to download forms for individuals that want to represent themselves in Federal Court. They are called pro se. I did not know how I was going to sue Mr. Stankey to stop his minions from harassing me. After all, he was in his tall ivory tower in Dallas, Texas, and I’m sitting in my front porch swing. To sue a person living in another state, it is called a Diversity of Citizenship complaint. The summons and complaint can be mailed by certified restricted delivery to the person. Another thing that I learned is that being pro se, you have to hand write everything. The original goes to the person you sue, and a copy of the complaint is given to the Clerk of the Federal Court.

AT&T mailed out a post card with the words: “We will resolve any disputes by individual arbitration and not by jury trial or class action.” I had demanded a jury trial which is inviolate by the 7th Amendment to the United States Constitution. So I mailed a copy of the post card to the Kentucky Attorney General, the Kentucky Public Service Commission, the United States Justice Department, the Federal Trade Commission, the Federal Communications Commission, to Kentucky Senator Rand Paul and to Kentucky Senator Mitch McConnell. I asked them to investigate AT&T’s intention to deny the citizens of the Commonwealth of Kentucky, and all other citizens of the United States, their right to a jury trial. I was just taking on life as it is.

Thomas Chisholm wrote the hymn “Living for Jesus.” These are some of his lyrics: “Living for Jesus a life that is true. Striving to please Him in all that I do; yielding allegiance, glad-hearted and free, this is the pathway of blessing for me. Living for Jesus Who died in my place, bearing on calv’ry my sin and disgrace; such love constrains me to answer His call, following His leading and give Him my all. Living for Jesus wherever I am, doing each duty in His holy Name; willing to suffer affliction and loss, deeming each trial a part of my cross. Living for Jesus through earth’s little while, my dearest treasure, the light of His smile; seeking the lost ones He died to redeem, bringing the weary to find rest in Him. O Jesus, Lord and Savior, I give myself to Thee, for Thou, in Thy atonement, didst give Thyself for me; I own no other Master, my heart shall be Thy throne; my life I give, henceforth to live, O Christ, for Thee alone.” Taking on life as it is, and leaving a foot print, that someone else might use, makes my life interesting.

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