

THOUGHTS FROM THE OLD MAN ON THE HILL

By John F. Hall

One of the things that I enjoy doing is writing life stories, and using a combination of things to enhance the “flow” of those stories. I define my flow as a combination of things to enhance the theme of the story. One element, that I use, is lyrics to songs. Paul Anka, Giles Thibaut, Claude Francois, and Jacques Revaux, wrote the song, “My Way.” These are their lyrics: “And now, the end is near, and so I face the final curtain. My friend, I’ll say it clear, I’ll state my case, of which I am certain. I’ve lived a life that’s full. I traveled



each and every highway. And more, much more than this, I did it my way. Regrets, I’ve had a few, but then again, too few to mention. I did what I had to do, and saw it through without exemption. I planned each charted course, each step along the byway. And more, much more than this, I did it my way. Yes, there were times, I’m sure you knew, that I bit off more than I could chew. But through it all, when there was doubt, I ate it up and spit it out. I faced it all, and I stood tall, and did it my way. I loved, I’ve laughed and cried,

I’ve had my fill, my share of losing. And now, as tears subside, I find it all so amusing. To think I did all that, and may I say, not in a shy way. For what is a man, what has he got? If not himself, then he has naught. To say the things he truly feels, and not the words of one who kneels. The record show I took the blows, and did it my way.”

Another element that I use, to enhance my stories, is with poems. Steven Scumacher wrote a poem called, “Lovely May.” These are his words: “May is springtime at its best, God’s gardening is complete, His flowers flaunt their colors, and fragrances, ever sweet. The trees, dressed in finest green, meadows are a verdant hue, the air resounds with birdsong under skies of baby blue. Winter’s just a memory that’s forgotten none too soon. We thank God for lovely May and welcome June.”

I enjoy sitting in my front porch swing, when the springtime weather is warm, and remembering all the happy memories, that I’ve shared, with my grandchildren, Andrea, Heather, and John-John, over the past three decades. Jeanne Dunaway, wrote the poem, “The Search for Happiness.” These are her words: “Jesus knows our every thought; for man believes that happiness is measured by what we possess. But if we look into “His Word,” we’ll find that this is most absurd; for any promise that He made makes no note of money paid. True happiness is free of charge in measurements small or large; for we receive what we give out pound for pound, the same amount... The secret of true happiness is not to seek out quest; but to give to others who have less of all these things that are best. True happiness comes from the heart; so, if you wish to do your part, don’t check inside your pocketbook... It’s in your heart you need to look.”

Springtime, on the hill where I live, comes the time of the year when the corporate farmer, Craig Perry, who rents the farm from the widow lady, plants his crops. I so enjoy the times when he plants the winter wheat. During those bleak, cold months, the green wheat fields, brighten my soul. Corless Booth wrote the poem, “Sowing seeds.” These are her words: “As you travel the road of life, be careful of the seeds you sow: after you

have planted them, how quickly they will grow. The reaping is always harder than sowing along the way. Remember for every seed you plant there will be a harvest day. Don't fill your garden with seeds of doubt or seeds of selfish greed. Fill instead with lots of love, to harvest the things you'll need. Never start sowing aimlessly, plant with this in mind, when your sowing in the wind, tares is all you'll find. If you plant with a loving heart, there will never be any waste. Sow your seed with kindness and never or hate. Plant with seeds of understanding and lots of patience, too. When it's time to reap the harvest, good things will return to you."

So what thoughts do I have, as old man living on Dyers Hill? I wonder, sometimes, if any of the stories, that I have written, these past 48 years, have made a difference in anyone's life? Margaret Peterson wrote a poem called, "It Makes a Difference." These are her words: "If everyone would put God first, how different life would be! Gone would be all hate and greed, and downright misery. For any pain God gave to us would be a chance to share a bit in all pain He knew to prove His love and care. We wouldn't try to run from pain, we'd know our soul must grow and bearing pain for the love of Him is quite the way to go. The earth is more than what we see — it's God's best way to teach all the lessons we must learn with none beyond His reach."

I've lost so much weight, by sickness, that I feel that I am half the man that I use to be. Grady Poulard wrote the poem, "The Measure of a Man." These are his words: "The measure of a man is not determined by his outward strength, or the volume of his voice, or the thunder of his action, or of his intellect or academic abilities. It is seen rather in terms of the love that he has for his family and for everyone. The strength of his commitments. The genuineness of his friendships. The sincerity of his purpose. The quiet courage of his convictions. The fun, laughter, joy and happiness he gives to his family and others. His love of life, his patience and his honesty and his contentment with what he has."

I've been so blessed with a wonderful family, and wonderful friends. I was given talent by Jesus Christ, to do so many things. But it is my faith that has sustained me as I've traveled over some of life's broken byways. I may be old, but I am grateful and content for all that I have received.

John F. Hall

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

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