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Donald B. Crawford, President

THE STAND
ALZHEIMER'S
CHARLTON HESTON

Alzheimer's is a brutal killer. It ravages the brain, which in turn gradually destroys bodily functions, and causes the patient to live often without consciousness or a sensitivity to reality. There is no cure. Getting the disease is a death sentence, slowly but surely.

Charlton Heston has Alzheimer's. Heston was one of the greatest actors Hollywood ever produced. Those of us who are Christian were blessed to watch, really to be deeply challenged by such movies as Ben Hur, The Ten Commandments and many other movies more secular. He was a commanding, daunting, formidable, manly, straight shooting actor, Heston was. He has done specials from the Holy Land and his reading of Bible passages is absolutely outstanding. He is 78 years old, and without this dreaded disease, seems otherwise to be the picture of health.

When learning he had the disease he immediately stated:

“I'm neither giving up nor giving in.”

Aware that someday his cognitive abilities may very well be destroyed, Heston prepared and recorded a warm and special message for those who know and love him. Here are his words.

“My dear friends, colleagues and fans, my physicians have recently told me I may have a neurological disorder whose symptoms are consistent with Alzheimer's Disease. I wanted to prepare a few words for you now because when the time comes, I may not be able to. I worked my whole life on the stage and screen before you. I found purpose and meaning in your response. For an actor, there is no greater loss than the loss of his audience. I can part the Red Sea but I can't part with you.

For now, I'm not changing anything. I'll insist on work when I can. The doctors will insist on rest when I must. If you see a little less spring in my step, if your name fails to leap to my lips, you'll know why. And if I tell you a funny story for the second time, please laugh anyway. I am still the fighter that Dr. King and J.F.K. and Ronald Reagan knew.

I'm confident about the future of America. I believe in you. I know that the future of our country, our culture, and our children is in good hands. I know you will continue to meet adversity with strength and resilience as our ancestors did and come through with flying colors, the ones on Old Glory.”

What a fabulous testimony. Nancy Reagan, wife of Ronald Reagan who has the dreaded disease, applauded Heston for going public with the information. She said she would include Lydia Heston in her prayers so that she would have the strength to face each day that lies ahead.

Four million Americans have this horrific killer. Although there is no cure, there are medical and scientific advancements which can allow for aggressive treatment which may slow the progress of the disease and maintain mental and physical normalcy far longer. How wonderful that would be.

The first priority of Americans is terrorism, all that that means, and rightly so. But as we rush to defend our great country with the concomitant expenditure of time, effort and money, we must never forget that it is our duty as human beings to do what we can to find cures for this killer and so many others. Alzheimer's, like Cancer or Cardiovascular Disease, can be viewed in the abstract, intellectually until such time as it hits home. There are many people who suffer directly or indirectly because of Alzheimer's. They know its cruel, brutal effect directly or indirectly. They know the pain of watching a loved one waste away. They can comfort and cry at the same time. Alzheimer's, whether they have it or not, is forever etched in their consciousness.

If anyone you know is affected by this killer, do something for them. Perhaps you might even be willing to make a charitable contribution to medical and charitable agencies which are fighting this disease and hunting for a cure. Perhaps you might even add Alzheimer's to your prayer list, asking for a modern day miracle, a God-given cure for this horrendous disease.

Alzheimer's is a killer but we can conquer the killer if all of us would do something. So, with respect and regard for all that Ronald Reagan has done for this country and you, and the good done by Charlton Heston, and in memory of those who have died from Alzheimer's or who are living and suffering with this disease, do something.