



# NightLight

A NEWSLETTER OF McLEAN MINISTRIES

"take heed....as to a light that shines in a dark place." II Peter 1:19

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## Dear Friends,



Not what we give  
But what we share  
For the gift without  
The Giver is bare.

James Russell Lowell (1819-1891)



The following is a copy of a recent email I sent to a friend. Mary strongly felt it was a message that would be helpful to many of you. (So, dear friend, may it bless you... again!)

*I am more and more convinced that our time here on earth is the birthing room, the first grade training ground, for what we are to become. I guess it is merely human to assume that our birth and the years following are real life events and then we die and... what? Go off to heaven, bodiless, to get our reward? But after taking time to examine our assumptions about all that, and to really check it with Scripture, it just rings more and more hollow, and I believe is clearly mistaken.*

*We are being trained for Real Life. Jesus talks about that real life of the world to come with a matter of fact clarity that we have either overlooked or deformed by our own imagination's misapprehension of what He was saying. **You will sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the Kingdom of God. I will not drink wine with you again till I drink it new with you in my Father's Kingdom.** Paul carries this on with words equally life-affirming when he says, **Do you not realize you will judge angels?** or **This present suffering is not even worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed to (and in) us.** Many other phrases could be cited. This stuff here is not what it is really all about ultimately, though it is the stuff Life will be eventually made of-without the pain.*

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Here we ARE learning real things in real time with real encounters that matter. But they are still only the stuff of what is to come in undeveloped form. We are learning to trust, to be patient, to endure, to discern. But most of all, we are learning to LOVE. *The purpose of our instruction is Love, from a pure heart*, Paul says. That is the purpose. And I don't think I am out of kindergarten yet.

I spoke to an old friend this morning whose dear wife of 40 years has dementia. He said, "Every day is like one long game of charades. She has to act out or pantomime the meaning of the words she is trying to communicate. But she has forgotten the words, and so I am not sure if what she is remembering and trying to spell out for me is even correct." I tried to enter the conversation with him expressing some degree of empathy, but as you know, unless we have truly been there, we just don't know. So I did not insult him with any 'I understand' words. He was kind at my honest ignorance and my fear of ever having to face such things myself. (Mary and I have talked about all sorts of potentials in our desire to leave nothing important unexamined, but we both end such conversations acknowledging that we cannot get ready for any such things.) And my old friend added, "I have learned that I cannot save her, heal her, or fix her. I cannot even sooth her fear or frustration. I can only love and serve her. And I have learned to live moment to moment, and take each day, each hour, as it comes." And I said, "How did you learn to do that?" I really wanted to know, for myself. He replied, "By grasping as fact what was once only a hunch. That this is not real life, that we are being trained by Love for Love. And when we have grown up a bit in LOVE, we will be ready to enter whatever is ahead that this is all really about." And I felt peace and relief for the first time in our conversation. All love really does lead to the Cross.

I don't mean to sound morbid, and I don't think you will interpret me that way because you know me. But I am increasingly tired of this classroom, this battlefield. I am increasingly Home-sick. But I have promises to keep, and miles to go before I sleep. And I have a lot yet to learn about Love. Nothing else, absolutely nothing else seems important any more.





## A Lot To Learn About Love

*Music and lyrics by Clay McLean - copyright 2004*

God knows I love my wife, I will spend all of my life  
Trying to give back to her what she has given me  
There's so much that she's forgiven in the daily course of living and  
As I watch the way she lives there's one thing I'm sure of  
That I've got a lot to learn about love.

And I love my children so, I try hard to let 'em know but  
When it comes to letting go I don't do that real well  
Older wiser folks than me often try to help me see that  
Love sometimes means turning loose, and giving them a shove  
But I've got a lot to learn about love.

If you asked me what love is I thought I knew the answer  
But the older I become the less I seem to know  
Every time I turn around I find a deeper meaning  
So I asked the only One who knows to please let my love grow.

There's a couple on our street. Now and then we chance to meet but  
She's the only one we greet, his mind left long ago  
I watch her as with tender care, she brushes back his windblown hair  
He doesn't even know she's there... and I tell God above...  
That I've got a lot to learn about love... I've got a lot to learn about love.

*From the music CD, "God, A Man, and A Woman"*

# Closing Thoughts...



Perfect love really does cast out all fear. In these strange days, all the idols of our culture are crumbling and people are being forced to face their mortal fragility. This is not a time to be judgmental and indifferent to the pain of others. It is the perfect time to show in tangible ways that love that has cast out our fear can offer comfort and help. Remember, you will be tempted to do nothing because you cannot do everything. Just do something, and you will see one day that your little loaves and fishes were more than enough. May we grow in Holy Love.



*In His Joy, Clay & Mary*

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