



# 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, 

The morning of November 22, 2002 Mary and I still lived up the mountain near Boone. I was pastoring then. I began the day usually reading Oswald Chambers: *"Beware of allowing yourself to think that shallow concerns of living are not ordained by God-They are as much of God as the profound events. It is not your devotion to God that makes you refuse to be 'shallow' but your wish to impress other people that you are not shallow...Be careful...the shallow issues of life are the things our Lord lived, and the servant is not above his master."* Yes Oswald. I got it. I always spent Saturday mornings preparing my message for the next morning. I figured this day would be no different. I was wrong.

I am not much of a handy man. That has served me well in helping me get out of many menial jobs. But some things just have to be done sometimes by whoever is available, even when it's me. Our house was eleven miles from the nearest store. We went to town purposefully or not at all. Mary discovered that the toilet in the hall bathroom had a broken seat. It was early on this Saturday morning when she told me that she did not want the weekend to come and go with a broken toilet seat because people tend to be in and out of a pastor's home on weekends and that was just not going to be a job we could put off. But I had a morning message to prepare. I did not know what it was going to be about. I needed to have time to study. So to get this task behind me I managed to settle my frustration, stuff my complaining, and drive to town.

So 11 miles in to Lowe's hardware (actually about 14 miles to the actual store) and 14 miles back, 28 miles total, I drove to get the replacement seat. I had measured it. Mary had then of course, measured it behind me, knowing me like she does. We both confirmed the needed dimensions. When I got home and began the repairs the seat did not fit. The inner explosion only stayed silent for the time it

took for me to get off the floor and step one foot out the bathroom door. I will not offer specific quotes here. Twenty eight more miles and I am back with the second new seat. It was the exactly correct size according to our measurements and the specs on the packaging. It did not fit. If anyone had been around at that moment to hear me it would not have mattered that I did not have my morning message ready because no one would have wanted to hear anything else I had to say once they heard what I was saying. Third trip; third seat; 84 miles now.

Same information on the package. This one fit. It is now mid afternoon. I sat beside the toilet speaking quietly so as not to further injure my wife's ears, briefly admiring my work, but inside I am just as angry as I had been while spewing. I pretty much had totally forgotten what Chambers had to say a few hours ago.

All I could think about was how stupid it is to spend my time with such meaningless mundane idiocy when I had the WORD OF GOD to deliver!!!! So I began to turn my thoughts to the really important work of the day, hearing God about what I was to speak on the next morning. I only began to improve as I patted myself on the back over what a thoughtful, unselfish, even generous husband Mary had. After all, how many men would have gone three times just because their wives didn't want guests to have to sit on a broken toilet seat, that is, if they should have to at all?

With very little inspiration able to eek its way

up through the labyrinth of my suppressed inner cauldron, I decided to just flip my bible open and see what verse my eyes would land on. So sitting still beside the toilet on the floor, my Bible lying near me, (My bible was lying there to make the symbolic statement that my real true calling was being totally neglected and dishonored) I give the pages a toss and place my finger on the opened page. These are the words I read: **They sat beside the pots.....and murmured. (Exodus 16:3)**

By the time it was dark outside, I was dark inside. I had no inspiration, no revelation, no word except one. Exodus 16:3. And it WAS remarkably accurate! The more I thought about how my much needed study and prayer time had been taken over because of a broken toilet seat, the more it kept me in a low glowing pilot light of rage. I got up the next morning and because I am faithful, dependable, and disciplined I once again began my morning with Chambers: *"Have mercy Oh Lord, for I am greatly filled with contempt... The thing we have to beware of is not so much our faith as our temper...A bad temper is tremendous in its effects. It is the enemy that penetrates right into the soul and distracts the mind from God. Beware of the daily cares of life. They are the things that can produce a wrong temper. It is extraordinary what an enormous power there is in the simple daily things to distract us from God. Refuse to be swamped by them."*

I only had two hours before time to speak. I knew I had my message. I simply told this story the way I am telling you here. Yes I made it as funny as I could in order to avoid the more serious facts. From the first word of Chambers the previous day to the last word of Chambers the following Sunday morning God had set me up clearly to **speak to me about my attitude**. God is not wasteful but He *can* be extravagant! He will send a person around the globe to speak to one soul, or send Clay to town three times for a toilet seat to help me see I am capable of the very thing Chambers warned about: the arrogance of refusing to be 'shallow' and of trying to be 'profound.'

The recorded message this month is about the dangerous and grave sin of grumbling. I am a well qualified expert on the subject. No, it is NOT a *how to do it* message. All joking aside, I hope we all will heed the warning it contains.

*Whatever you do,*  
**WORK AT IT WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AS WORKING  
FOR THE LORD, NOT FOR MEN, SINCE YOU KNOW  
THAT YOU WILL RECEIVE AN INHERITANCE FROM  
THE LORD AS A REWARD. IT IS THE LORD CHRIST  
YOU ARE SERVING.**  
**COLOSSIANS 3:23-24**



## Some Closing Thoughts...



The book of Hebrews refers to bringing the 'sacrifice of praise.' This obviously refers to the fact that offering praise is more often than not, a sacrificing of our negative feelings. We place our complaining on the altar and in its place, we offer instead a vocal proclamation of the goodness, faithfulness, and love of God. The less we feel the good things, the more our offering of praise is a true 'sacrifice.' If we will choose to offer praise in place of grumbling we will (I know it is true from many experiences with this) find our inner complaining becoming transformed into genuine gratitude. This transformation has the power to also transform whatever situation we were grumbling about. This is not some nifty little positive thinking gimmick. Declaring His goodness is a form of spiritual warfare. It is taking the right side of the argument against evil.

*Christ is risen, indeed!*

*Love, Clay & Mary*



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