



# 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,



*Hear my cry, O God; attend unto my prayer.  
From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee,  
when my heart is overwhelmed:  
lead me to the rock that is higher than I.  
For thou hast been a shelter for me,  
and a strong tower from the enemy.  
I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever:  
I will trust in the covert of thy wings. Selah.*

*Psalms 61:1-4*



Some of the best teachers of the well-ordered spiritual life will tell you to try to set a regular time and a specific place for your prayers. This helps build an atmosphere that will re-enforce your mind and emotions, and help develop a kind of rhythm of regularity that supports a sense of order and focus for each day. It is a time to fill up our love tanks, and delight in His presence. I have found that advice to

be helpful IF the day is orderly and sane. And I love the early morning quiet that I try to keep protected from any intrusions. But for many of us, as good as this sounds, it is not always doable. Life does intrude! Your quiet place and regular time can quickly fade away as the demands and emergencies pour in upon you.

It is ironic that the same advice to make a regular time and place for prayer can be both helpful *and* harmful to the goal of life with God. Under many circumstances, I have found myself thinking, "I can't wait to get to my quiet place with the Lord!" But one day, when the demands were extra pressing and my heart was sinking under an extra heavy load of cares (some my own, and several additional ones laid on me by troubled people, then, added to that, the ongoing insanity of our current culture), I heard the Lord say clearly in my spirit, "Please don't leave Me out because you are waiting to get to the right time and place to be with Me. I am here, with you, NOW, in this mess." I was bathed suddenly with phrases from scriptures I have fed on

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over the years: **Cast all your care on Me, for I care for you... I will never leave you or forsake you... See, I am with you always, even to the end of the age... I will not leave you as orphans. I will come to you... I will keep you in perfect peace when your mind is stayed on Me, for you trust in Me.** Psalm 61 (see above) began playing in my head like an old friend returning. It is a Psalm that happens to fit perfectly into an English lyric song format. And though I have sung it for decades, on this particular difficult day, when I could not get to my quiet holy space, *the Presence I enjoy in that space came to me where I was.* (Of course, He didn't have to come to me. He was/is already there/here within me! That's the point. He is my hiding place. In Him I live and move and have my very being!) **If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. (John 14:23)** Think about that! The blessed Trinity – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – lives within us moment by moment of every day. How much more so when we intentionally declare, “Welcome to my home, God. Fill me up with your life in my deepest parts.” We then begin to truly live – experiencing His presence and not just leaving these scriptures stuck in our heads as intellectual truth only.

Many married couples will understand this. There is a subtle danger of making special times together, like a date night or a weekend away, the goal in the future empowered with so much expectation to come, that you miss the little opportunities in the now of everyday living. You so look forward to the scheduled time and space to reconnect and open your hearts to one another, that you miss the moments right before you. As good as planned special times are, nothing should ever take the place of the daily heart-to-heart union, even on chaotic days. That is an accurate picture of our life in Christ. Special times and places are great. But nothing should ever take the place of our moment by moment life with and in Him. It is that growing sense of union with Him in the face of our darkest trouble, that empowers us with love to not only endure, but to also shine in the dark. **The Lord is my helper. I will not fear what men can do to me.**

I just emerged from my morning regular quiet place with Him. It was very blessed. It was extra wonderful because I have not been able to be there this entire week. But I did not return to my quiet place with a sense that I was returning to Him. He was with me right in the middle of this crazy week. He was right there in the middle of the messes and the busyness. And He is with you now, no matter how painful or frightening or depressing things are. No matter if you feel Him or not. He is there. He will never leave you, or forsake you. Get that. Hold it. Revisit it over and over in your mind until it sinks down into the core of you. Then worship Him in the face of all contrary emotions. This is how we worship Him in spirit and truth. *In spirit* means not according to our emotions. *In truth* means not according to the news. These words are not just something we know in our heads, but so much more! They are to be experienced and lived! These are words to penetrate our everyday lives, to shape our bodies and souls, and transform us from glory to glory into the community of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Worship is where you feed these truths of His abiding presence. You are deeply loved. And you are **never, ever** alone.



# Book Review



## *The Pastor* by Eugene H. Peterson (author of *The Message*)

Mary doesn't read theology much. And she rarely reads any book twice unless she really loves it. So it is significant to me that right now she is reading Eugene Peterson's autobiographical memoir simply titled *The Pastor* the second time. It may be that she has lived through aspects of Peterson's own story by living with me through similar events. There are many aspects of this memoir that I do not relate to directly. Still, I drew wisdom, joy, and greater understanding from another part of the body of Christ on many pages, as well as some really funny moments maybe only a pastor would find as funny as I did.

I, of course, have my own views of how New Testament life should be lived out in a local body, including aspects of church leadership that I view differently, as well as how I would interpret some life events. But none of that is the main focus. The overall value of this very readable book is his ability to communicate how he learned to listen, to humble himself, and to yield to God's transforming dealings that come through the many changes, challenges, joys, and sorrows of caring for people where they are, and not where they are not (yet). His honesty about his own struggles touched me deeply since I have so many of my own. That makes this a book all of us, pastor and regular every day person, can profit from in our spiritual growth. It is written more as a narrative in story form, and highlights with astounding clarity the truth of holy sacred space and time, both in our personal lives, and also in the community of relationships we all have in everyday life. It is about finding out what God is doing, and joining ourselves to Him, rather than be focused on what we are doing for Him.

We seem to be in a time where the pressures of our current conflicts have increased our tendency to be critical and rejecting of anything or anyone we disagree with, rather than increase our longing for loving unity. A short overview of the internet will give you an abundant view of what I mean. Instead of simply disagreeing or engaging in honest but respectful dialogue, we have to put up with harsh legalistic diatribes and a prolific use of the labels like heretic or false teacher. So I pray that as you read *The Pastor*, be aware that you are walking with a man sharing his story with us, in order that we might glean from his experience, rather than be tempted to disregard the beautiful truths that are revealed within his story because we major on the differences. May we all become in deeper communion with one another as we flesh out the good news of the true gospel of Jesus Christ.



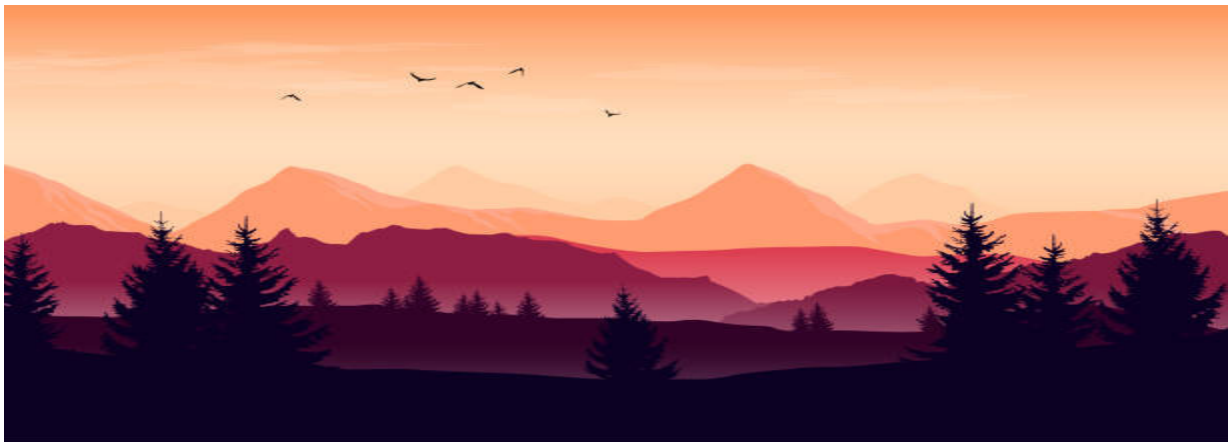
# Closing Thoughts...



*Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision. The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining. The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the Lord will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel.* Joel 3:14-16

*I am mindful every time I write you of our current disintegration as a nation, and of a growing antichrist hostility. And I think of you - of your loved ones, your children, your children's children, as I think of my own. We are not entering a darkness unto more darkness. No! We are entering a darkness that is darkest just before the DAWN. He holds all we are and all we love in His hands. Let Him love you and yours. Let Him fill you with His peace. Trust Him. Worship Him. As He makes His home in you, make your home under His wings.*

*Come Lord Jesus, Clay & Mary*



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