



# 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,

For those who adhere to a Biblical Jewish calendar you took time during the Days of Awe [Rosh Hashanah/Yom Kippur /Feast of Trumpets/Tabernacles] to consider your frailty in the face of the Eternal, the wisdom or foolishness of choices you have been making, and how those choices have been influencing your actions, which will determine your destiny. In the austerity of such contemplation you set yourself before the Holy and asked for a greater discernment, a deeper repentance, and a more joyful response to Life.

If you do not know the purpose of the Fall Feasts, but as a disciple of Jesus, you still seek to find a place of serious self-examination and "new beginnings," then you might use the "new year" of the gentile calendar as a mile marker. Sadly, many believers will not. They will do the "Christmas thing" that leads into the "New Year thing" with little thought for the reason the Creator set times and seasons.

We are eternal creatures living temporarily in what is, for us, an unnatural environment. Fish never seem to be puzzled by water (as far as I know!) but we are constantly making silly remarks about the passing of time as if it is a total surprise to us. Such statements come from my own mouth more and more. I still recall how amazed my great aunts were when every Christmas upon seeing my brothers and me, they went on about how we'd all grown! I always thought, "What did you expect?" We had 12 great aunts on my father's side so we heard this in quadruphonics x 3. As a boy I was puzzled for at least eight seconds at this repeated weird ritual. Then I hit a certain age when it didn't seem so silly. I have developed my own weird rituals, like on the one hand asking my kids in a frustrated tone, "When are you going to *grow up*?" and then at some other point, saying in a wistful tone, "Why are you growing so fast?" Here lately every time I look at Kira I am shaken by the fact that no matter how much I try to find her, the baby and the toddler are gone, and the grammar schoolgirl is morphing into someone who no longer laughs at my corny jokes and gets red-faced if I dance in the grocery store. (She says it is embarrassing- go figure). Soon I will be looking for the teenager and wondering where she went too.

This is bitter sweet. But it is by loving design. It is meant to underscore that though we live in time, we were not designed to live in this dimension only- we are heading somewhere else. This longing for time to stay and for time to hurry up and pass is a dance designed to prepare us for the ultimate Great Dance.

We are amphibious. We *have* a body subject to time/space but we *are* spirit, not subject to a mere three dimensions. (Actually we *are both body and spirit* but that is too much to get into right now and it messes up my current point.) As we draw nearer Home, time seems in our eyes to become sort of a frustration. The tug of time calls us towards earth while the tug of the Spirit calls us 'further up and further in,' towards the Eternal. Thankfully, one day this rift will be forever mended and 'earth and heaven will be one,' as will be our spirit/body.

But how do we cope in the meantime? I said we are amphibious. If I understand it correctly, that means we must live in cooperation with both earthly and eternal realms. The Greek word means 'both kinds of life.'

We cannot live without encountering both the earthly and the heavenly. The 'time you spend' encountering the Eternal cannot POSSIBLY be 'wasted time.' For by its very nature, encounter with the Eternal invests its nature back into time. So it is not possible that when you 'take time' to 'spend' with God you are 'wasting time', or even 'spending time' no matter how spiritual or non spiritual you may feel while doing it. It is the action of the will in the offering that makes the contact fruitful, not the feelings. See all these time/space/matter words I have to use here? It is that sense of 'time getting away from me' that drives me (falsely) into a 'better use of time.' It is not possible to 'waste time on Jesus.' A very wise for his age young man use to say to me "time you enjoy wasting is never wasted time." And enjoying the Presence of God is the wisest *waste of time* I know. Or as Oswald Chambers says, ***"borrow the atmosphere of earth from the altitude of Heaven."***



## THANK YOU!!! AS ALWAYS



Because of your generous support we were able to help hurting families, give free teaching material to various ministries at home and abroad, supply a United States battleship with our entire library of teaching (which the chaplain reports is now circulating among the crew all the time), and you launched new projects which would simply never be born apart from your help. Every financial gift you give sets in motion ministry that is active 24 hours a day somewhere all over the globe, from Japan to Australia, from Oxford England to Oxford Mississippi. And you keep our lights on here too! Thank you.

# Our Need to Pray

Beware of complaining over the things that drive you to ask God for things. "I just get out of one battle and there is another hitting me in the face." (I know all about complaining- that is why I am an expert at telling you to not do it.) I hear it more often than I used to: "Why bother to pray? What good does it do? The battles just keep on coming.... Besides God already knows doesn't He? And even better than we know ourselves! So what good does it do for me to tell Him or ask Him anything? Why should I even try to pray?"

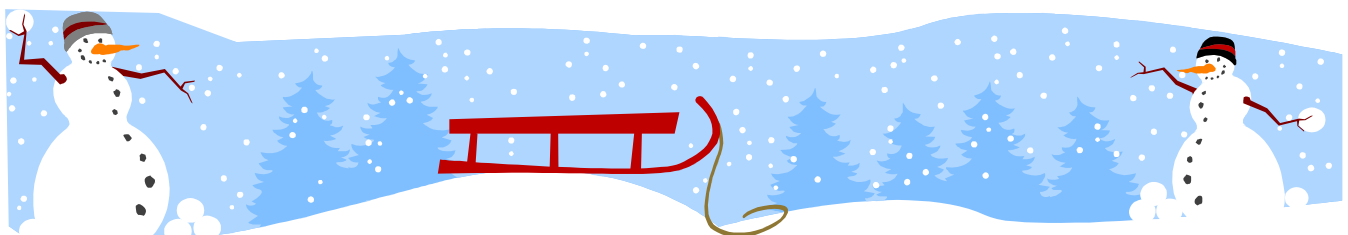
Well, here is the answer: God is not in need of your grocery list or your complaints, but He welcomes them. He needs nothing and no one. Still, if I can say it this way, He is in need of you being in need of Him. He doesn't need to need you, but has somehow chosen to want you so much that that desire for you is like a true need in His heart. (See Psalm 81:13, Deut. 5:29, Luke 19:41-42, Hosea 11:1-9, Jeremiah 31:3 for starters). God needs nothing, yet He makes a place in His heart to express a longing for us, not for His sake, but for ours. He longs not because He is empty and we could fill Him, but because we are empty and He could fill us. So even His 'longing' is out of His abundance of over-

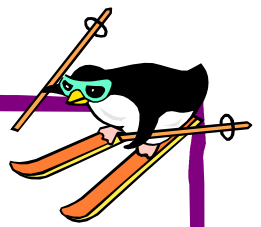
flowing life which is the essence of His Love.

SO....while we are in these shadowlands it makes sense that He would constantly allow the fallen nature to bring us over and over to points of need. His desire is that we bring that need to Him. The filling of that need is not the real issue. ***The real need is our need to come to Him.*** THAT is why we pray. We need to come to Him. We need to pour our hearts out to Him. We need to need Him over and over, until we learn that our deepest longings are being met, not by the repeated interventions FROM Him, but by the union we develop WITH Him when we come. And so that you don't get the idea that I am talking down to you, I write this to you at a time when, at fifty-five, I am facing an awakened and deeper level of need in me which I thought I had fully dealt with and which at times FEELS more tender, more painful, more weak and broken than it ever did when I was younger. It is such a mercy to be brought over and over back to my full awareness of WHO I need, even when it is shown to me again and again in WHAT I need, and all my 'maturity' is stricken dumb, and like a child I cry out for Abba.



## Happy New Year!





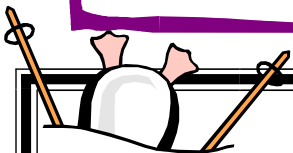
## Closing Thoughts...

The mundane-ness of everyday life, with its joys and its sorrows, with its drudgery and its high moments are meant to develop in us the power of faithfulness. Jesus talked about being faithful in 'small things' because, to paraphrase, the small things are really the big things. It is very doubtful I will remain faithful in a large confrontation if I am unfaithful in a small one. It is how I respond in the day by day, when things are not 'exciting' that will determine what I am made of in the high moments of both joyful victory and extreme battle. This truth shakes me to my knees often. Because I am not very consistent in being faithful in small things. I can get so angry at 'little interruptions' or overly frustrated at 'small disappointments.' *Disappointment-His appointment.* I realize more (and need to even more) that whatever is happening, God's focus on me is not so much my 'achieving MY goal' of whatever it is. Rather it is on the achievement of His character in me so if I am cut I bleed Jesus. If there is one thing I pray for, it is that Christ would be formed in me. And that is mostly achieved in the daily grind- whatever it may be.

The following is a prayer for us all as we continue on our pilgrim way. May love be set in order in each of us as we become overflowing with His quietness within and His peace without, no matter how dark and difficult the path we walk.

*Dear Lord and Father of mankind,  
Forgive our foolish ways!  
Reclothe us in our rightful mind;  
In purer lives Thy service find,  
In deeper reverence, praise.*

*Drop Thy still dews of quietness,  
Till all our strivings cease;  
Take from our souls the stain and stress,  
And let our ordered lives confess  
The beauty of Thy peace.*



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