



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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INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Prayer &
Study 1-2

Mistakes &
Messes 3

Closing
Thoughts 4

Dear Friends,



Of the making of many books there is no end, and much study wearies the body. Here is the end of the matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. (Ecclesiastes 12:12-13)

We know that we all possess knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. The man who thinks he knows something does not yet know as he ought to know. But the man who loves God is known by God. (1 Corinthians 8:1-3)



Have you ever seriously considered how many gaps we have in our thinking? We all pretty well THINK we know what it is we think we know. The human mind has an amazing capacity for razzle-dazzle, a trick it plays on itself whenever difficult demanding subjects confront it. First we try to side-step the issue. If we can't do that, then we run down a menu of thoughts we have applied to that particular subject, and we note what answer we have usually given in the past which seemed to slide us by. But what happens when we encounter someone who just doesn't buy our answer, and we find ourselves caught in a real confrontation on

that difficult topic and we cannot easily ignore or dismiss it? We begin to panic a bit. Then we become consciously aware that we do NOT have our facts clearly in view, we don't know what we thought we knew, or we don't have access to the language that we would have formed if we had invested in a truly serious study of the topic. So we begin to grapple for words. And we expend all the energy we should be spending in real human interaction by trying to find a good comeback instead of speaking truth in love. If we are spiritually awake enough, we might ask the Holy Spirit for immediate help. But if that doesn't work (which it rarely does when we are caught so unprepared), we can always get angry! We then increase our volume and turn the conflict into a personal attack, which we can then easily and quickly escape. We do all this while making it appear we are taking the high road by ceremoniously leaving rather than to further engage in un-Christian fruitless conflict!

Continued on page 2

Thankfully, most of us have not had this exact experience. (As you might have guessed, I drew this description from my own vast memories of personal failure at being unprepared, unwise, impatient, and argumentative.) Unless you are in a line of work that places you in scenarios like this, or you are thrown in the middle of university campus cultural conflicts, you may not be able to relate to every aspect of this imaginary encounter. But if we are thinking and moving among the others of our kind, we can probably relate to some parts of it. For example, like thinking we know what we have not seriously examined enough to know. And then becoming aware too late that we don't know what we assumed we knew. We fear speaking the truth in the market place of ideas because we have rarely done our inner personal homework. We feel insecure so we don't engage. We fear we don't know...enough. But when will you know enough? See, there is another problem. We can become so knowledgeable of our facts that we become arrogant. Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up.

Now some might rightly say the greatest homework we can do to prepare for the event of needing to speak the truth is prayer. And I totally agree. The word of the wise is "He who has prayed well has studied well." In my experience, that truism cannot be reversed with the same force. You cannot say he who has studied well has prayed well. I know too many who have got all the information down, but there is no anointing when they speak. They studied well. But there is no power. No, the first rule in being empowered to communicate truth in love with positive effect is prayer. It says of the disciples in **Acts 4:13: When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been WITH JESUS.** Those who spend time in relationship with Jesus will manifest a power in what they say. They may be lacking in erudition, but sharpened with divine accuracy.

That does not mean that the early disciples were not aware of their times and did not study. We may be limited in our resources, education, or platform. We may not be able to discuss with detailed effectiveness the present political wars or the intricacies of other religions. We may not know all the pros and cons of evolution or the theological nuances of divine sovereignty and free will. Yet none of us is limited in our prayer power. And if we seek His Face, He will have us at the right place and the right time to speak the right word in the right way.

Don't be willfully ignorant. Learn. Study. Be aware of the current battles as much as you can be. But don't allow yourself to be drowned by the vast and ever increasing demands on you to know everything about everything. He alone is our All in all. Live in daily ongoing communion with God. For this is the greatest knowledge of all: Jesus loves me, THIS I KNOW.



Mistakes and Messes

Let the peace of God keep your heart and mind...

I shall keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Me...

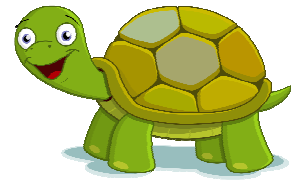
Let the peace of God guide your heart...

We have a NEW CAR! (Well, not really new. It is a 2014, but new to us.) No, it is not what you think. We did not decide to buy another car. I wrecked ours. We HAD to buy a replacement. In fact, Kira reminded me that the last three cars I purchased have been that same way. (Only two were my fault. The middle wreck was not my fault!) How did it happen? I came to a stop sign. I stopped. I looked both ways. Then I drove straight into a Ford Ranger truck like he wasn't there. It was easy. Too easy. I simply did not SEE him coming. I looked. But I did not see. No time to think. No way to go back and try to figure out what I was thinking. What WAS I thinking? Or rather, what was I NOT thinking? How many versions of me are out there every moment? Driving and not thinking, or not driving because I AM thinking? Thinking about everything except what is right in front of me! For about 24 hours I fought off fears that I was simply mentally off. But it was not that. It was simply overload in my head, causing me to not be fully present in the present. And thankfully, it only cost me a car and the other guy a flat tire. It took me some time in prayer to come back to my true center in Him.

We often blame God for so many things that we simply did not steward well. Not every accident, of course, can be blamed on our failure to obey what we know. But so many messes CAN be! We all make mistakes. We all have our messes (some caused by us; some caused by others). **BUT WE ARE NOT DEFINED BY THEM.** We are defined by the love of God revealed to us at the Cross. It is a very personal love that God has for each one of us. None of our mistakes or messes EVER changes His love for you and me. No matter what we do (or don't do), we are His beloved. May we always come back to our true center in Him... no matter how long it takes!



Closing Thoughts...



In the physical world, much knowledge comes through study. It comes by learning through trial and error. It is something that is taught to us by others. But in the spiritual kingdom, it is more caught than taught. True knowing comes through union. Union with God. (Like salvation, it is about a living relationship with God.) It is not simply an intellectual knowing, but a heart knowing. As we live in daily communion with Him, we are coming into true spiritual knowledge. May we all come to be IN THE KNOW...in HIM!

With Love, Clay & Mary



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