



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,

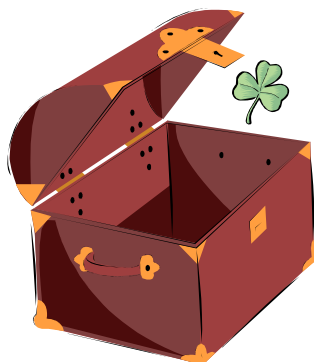
I HAVE VERY IMPORTANT WORK !!!



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I have a treasure box. I keep it in the 'ministry archives' (that is the over stuffed closet behind my desk.) It is not an object any thief would notice. There are no twinkling shiny things in it. There are lots of paper notes but not government issued- just love notes, and letters, and cards. They are worthless to the world and priceless to me. They were written by those who make up the fabric of my life. There are anniversary cards and letters from Mary written when we had to be apart. Father's day cards from my children. Notes from close friends and family written either at times of congratulation or of unusual stress and difficulty. There are letters from people I do not personally know but who wanted to let us know that something we taught somewhere once helped save a marriage or restore a wayward son or daughter. And more recently, there are e-mails from people who tracked me down via the Internet who wanted me to know that even in the early and very dark days of my young adulthood, when my own life was a moral shambles of confusion and shame, I somehow was used by God's mercy, to bless them anyway. My hands and heart

tremble when I read these letters. For I know all too well (and yet maybe not yet well enough) the huge responsibility that goes with instructing people in the Lord's Name. (**"Let none who seek you ever be put to shame because of me Oh Lord...Psalm 69:6**) No trophy hanging on my wall from some organization or diploma from any school could come anywhere close to being as powerful as the contents of my cardboard treasure box. I pilfer through it on rare occasions when I am especially drained.

I turned to it a few days ago because I realized that slowly I had allowed my heart to become a bit hardened. We have a government out of control and an economy sliding towards oblivion. Foolish and even damnable false teaching is popularized by a thousand pseudo Christian platforms leading people who knows where. Christian leaders trade marriage partners like hobbies, and perversion is now an *identity* worthy of Big Brother's protection according to the fairy dust makers in Washington. The enemies once at our gate are now within the gate and even controlling it. War clouds are forming in the Middle East while the average person seems to think it is all just an episode of **24**.

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Yet in spite of the ongoing cultural amusement business carrying on full steam, the seedlings of people's private poisons are erupting more and more. Corruption and instability long kept at bay by a now ever shrinking prosperity is oozing to the surface in families, churches, and businesses.

There is no time to waste. Surely I need to address these huge issues, don't I? I am failing as a watchman on the wall if I don't sound the trumpet! I am responsible to shout the warning so I must keep focused on the battle. After all, it is incredibly important work, right?

But in the midst of my very important writing here in the depth of my very important creative sanctuary, Kira (my oldest grandchild) just had the audacity to enter in order to ask me to cut up her apple. My very important thinking which I turn into very important writing is now rudely interrupted by the sound of (our daughter) Holly's three week old baby girl Mya, our number five grandchild. She can't tolerate a dirty diaper for more than thirty seconds and that God-given power of an infant to scream in ways that strike your spinal cord then run up your back to explode in your ears demanding immediate action is perfected in Mya when there is ooze in her diaper. Just as I was sure I had not been considered for the diaper job (I'm usually not) and was turning back to my very important writing, Mary, who of all people should know not to invade my sacred space while I am birthing prose that will save humanity, [or at least the western world], calls down the hall to remind me I need to return a phone call.

Men especially tend to seek so much of our sense of value from our 'work' and rightly so. God intended that to some degree. But when I can't work, when my mind is stalemated by anger, grief, exhaustion, and overload, and I turn to my little treasure box for perspective, I do not find one of my great epistles there.

I find little short writings from others, crayon works of art, and little cards once carefully chosen and lovingly signed- that together tell a much greater story than all I ever write. It is the story of how, in the day by day drudgery of living, a supernatural power enters in riding on the back of the most simple and mundane objects. Another Perspective from Another World- the Power that made the worlds, condescends into our world through the notes of a loved one, or the crayons of a child, or a wife's Anniversary card. And these little objects somehow provide meaning where there has been bewilderment, and energy where there has been exhaustion. Joy overrides sorrow, and awakens strength out of weakness. The angel Gabriel came to the prophet Daniel when he was exhausted to the point of fainting, and brought a message from God. Daniel said, **"He spoke, and I was strengthened."** My angelic messages are stored in a cardboard box, but they are no less powerful. When I read them I can say just as surely, **"He spoke, and I was strengthened."**

Now that the very important work I was trying to write has been edited by apples, diapers, and phone calls, I need you to forgive me for changing gears. You will miss the vitally important document I was writing and you will instead be exposed to the core of what is crying up from inside of me. I guess that is your loss. But just how much of what we do is really so important??? Only God knows.

I think of how many long demanding hours Tom Howard and I spent working on the music *that had to get out because it was so important*. And I still believe it is, and it will. But *now* I would give all those years of work in exchange for hearing Tom laugh again, to tell him again how I hate sushi because it tastes like dead fish and that a real American would be eating hamburgers & fries instead, or to discuss minor details

of theology while re-writing a violin line. I didn't disregard the 'little moments.' I just didn't give them the attention they deserved. The big important issues at hand were too demanding. I don't think we can help doing that. It is the nature of the passing of time. That is why the Psalmist wrote, **"Teach us to number our days so that we can present to you a heart of wisdom..." (Psalm 90)** We cannot discern what is important on our own. The Holy Spirit has to teach that to us.

I will get up from my very important writing now and cut up an apple. And maybe instead of feeling interrupted I will just be thankful a more qualified person is changing the diaper. (After all, a wise man knows what are and are not his gifts!!) And most of all, maybe I will show respectful appreciation to Mary for her gentle consistent ability to keep our life orderly instead of sighing loudly as a way of complaining that, "I was busy. Can't it wait?" Maybe I will learn to follow her example and show proper respect to the person waiting for my return phone call. Maybe I will notice the sacredness of the ordinary instead of having an *eruption over an interruption*. Because *maybe* a million years from now no one will remember or care what great work I did, but it may matter a great deal whether I learned to show respect, honor, and affection to my wife, my waiting children, or the stranger on the phone who may make a total change for the good because I did not view them as an interruption but as part of the meaning of it all. Can you picture anyone in the *World to Come* reading a Nightlight article? But there may be all sorts of treasure in the World to Come that was formed out of the raw material of loving care and true giving self sacrifice we expressed in the so called 'little things.' (Remember Tolkein's "Leaf by Niggle") Perspective is the rarest and most valuable of gifts.

The power to see what is truly valuable in the moment it most needs to be recognized in order to give things their proper due is a faculty beyond all earthly measure. And we will always miss the vital if we are so busy doing our important work that we fail to stop and humbly ask for the holy supernatural eyes only the Spirit can give.

So what if you don't have a box? Or anything similar? Then maybe you could become the supplier of someone else's box. It is not hard to find someone not far from you that could greatly benefit from a note, a card, or a visit from you. The only way I ever found my way out of certain kinds of deep pain and aloneness was to go to the saddest wing of the local hospital and look for a place to touch the pain of others.

Many who knew Dr. Robert Lindsay, the great pastor and scholar of Jerusalem, asked him why he didn't spend more time writing. After all, he had forgotten more valuable Hebraic revelation than many would ever learn. But Dr. Lindsay was too busy taking care of people, loving them, guiding them, teaching them. They are his books, his epistles, 'known and read by all men...' to borrow from another Hebraic teacher.

I don't think God is looking for 'great men' because there aren't any, not really. I don't think He is interested in our doing 'great things' because how would we measure what that is this side of Reality? He is only interested in our seeing the greatness of His Person and the greatness of His Grace towards us. Then in humility awakened in us by that vision, we will learn to see the meaning in the moment, the treasure in the mundane all around us and to treat life and those we live with, with due respect. Somehow then we end up doing great things- at least in the eyes of the Only One Who matters.





Some Closing Thoughts...

The Holy Land of the Broken Heart

Jesus in this life of mine, more and more your grace I find
In the kingdoms I decline.... in the battles lost.
All that I would hold on to, hide away and keep from you
Fades like diamonds made of dew.... underneath your Cross.
All the useless ways of my will, claiming peace while peace-less still
All the dreams so unfulfilled, bitter empty air.
Hallow brag, ambition's boast, haunt the heart like tired ghosts
Leave their lessons and their yokes...and their cold despair.

Victory's an empty word, success simply seems absurd
When compared to you my Lord, and your hope that heals.
No conditions but the truth, all the shackled shame let loose
Forgiveness the living proof, that your love is real....

And when my dance of days is through, when my oldest hour seems brand new
When all desires are for You, may my story be
That my treasures weren't of gold, that my pride lost all its control
To You, oh Lover of my Soul, Jesus, all to Thee.

Jesus, Lord of all I am, hold me with your wounded hands
Keep me in the holy land of the broken heart.

The Holy Land of the Broken Heart by Michael Kelly Blanchard from the album *Mercy in the Maze*
Contact Quail Ministries, Inc. 121 W. Avon Rd. Unionville, CT 06085 or Google Quail Ministries or Michael Kelly Blanchard.



With Love,
Clay

Mary



McLean Ministries

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