



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,



Genuine faith lives not by curiosity but by thirst.

Alexandre Schmemmann

My soul thirsts for you, my flesh faints for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water. (Psalm 63:)



I suppose there is a time in the early journey of life with Jesus that faith can be limited to what we might call a strong interest in spiritual things. We go to meetings and listen to messages. If we are really serious, we read and even study. But youth can't help but be divided by the variety of life options, and we are easily distracted. And such distractions are no crime. It is a natural even expected thing of youth to want to explore. After all, everything is new.

But whether it is the mere passing of time, or the wear and tear of living through the events and seasons of time, faith eventually becomes no longer an interest in spiritual things. It ceases to be an item, even the top item on our list of several priorities. And at some point (which is different for each of us in that we are all created to be unique), faith becomes a longing. Then the longing expands to living every day with the object of that faith as can be possible in this earthly realm. There may still be those glitches of the brain that seem to offer some reasonable argument that all this just can't really be true. But such thoughts are so devoid of reason, of meaning, and of attraction, that they become dismissed as fast as they sneaked back in. And we find that struggling to believe is not even in our sphere of consideration any more. You are living with Him. You weep in His arms. You know His



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correction, provision, and care. You experience His ongoing engagement with you through life. There comes a point where you do not waste time cogitating about mere human questions as if you were still a novice on the threshold of truth. How do you struggle to believe there is air, or sunlight, or water? He has become your very Life. In Him you literally do live and move and have your being. It is at this point in life that faith stops being a curiosity. It stops being a topic of discussion among like-minded seekers. Faith becomes, as Father Schmemmann said, a THIRST. I simply do not think in terms of wondering about whether this or that faith proposition can really be true. I might as well wonder if I was begotten or had a mother. In HIM I have come to live, and to move, and to have my being. And there are moments (thankfully brief ones or I could not endure them), when my longing to be with Him, to see His face, to be fully HOME, is so overwhelmingly present that I know my body could not survive the intensity of that longing. Then I understand why only a resurrected body could stand that intensity! This is not a death wish. It is not a fantasy I turn to because I'm having a bad day on the earth and want to transfer to a better climate. It is not even Heaven I am thinking about. It is the Person Himself. And I want to be closer, and know as I am known.

Now I know my sacramental brothers and sisters who come from a tradition where the offering of the Body and Blood is only celebrated corporately, and under the direction of a trained ordained leadership, will possibly whence a bit at this. But I also know they will forgive me for it. The only place I have ever been able to turn at times of such longing is to Bread and Wine, alone with Him. He said that as often as I ate this Bread and drank this Cup I was re-remembering (I Corinthians 11:25), that is, reconnecting with Him, that in that simple homely meal I was coming Home, to Him close up and personal. (Revelation 3:20) It is in those silent, secluded, intimate moments when I have no words I can say, that I fall before Him. Then as a simple dependent child, I take and eat and drink. Because in those moments, faith is no longer a curiosity. Faith is a THIRST. I want to try to make you thirsty too. Because the invitation to that table with just you and Him alone together is always being offered. You alone are the only one who can hear it.



Faithing (by Mary)

For it is by grace you have been saved, THROUGH FAITH – AND THIS NOT FROM YOURSELVES, IT IS THE GIFT OF GOD – not by works, so that no one can boast. (Ephesians 2:8)

Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead...You see that a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone...As the body without the spirit is dead, SO FAITH WITHOUT DEEDS IS DEAD. (James 2: 17, 24, 26)

Faith is a verb, not a noun. We are not dependent on our faith IN God, but rather on the faith OF God. We are to faith – to thirst – for God. I prefer the word faithing to remind me of this important truth. We are to be faithing in God's faithfulness to us. When we turn our eyes to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and keep our gaze focused on Him, we are faithing. Believing – not only from a decision of the mind, but also from the heart – is faithing.

We often hear the phrase that our prayers were not answered because of our lack of faith. Really? I do not agree. After all, it took faith to pray the prayers! God is always pleased whenever we turn to Him. He is not a punisher of our lack of faith, but rather a rewarder of our faith in Him – no matter how big or small. Faithing always pleases God, because we are putting our trust (our faith) in His faithfulness, not in our own capacity. It is not about how much faith we have, but about giving all we do have to the Person of our longing. It is not about MY faith, but HIS FAITHFULNESS.

Faithing is a result of living day in and day out in the love of our Heavenly Father. Faith, hope, and love... Faithing, hoping, and loving... This is the way of life we are called to live as followers of our precious Lord Jesus Christ. Keep up the faithing!



Movie Review

The Case for Christ



This film tells the story of Lee Strobel's journey from rabid atheist Chicago Times news reporter to humble disciple of Jesus. It is done well enough to gain a 77% favorable rating on the secular film review listing. It is not cheesy, preachy, or boring. It should still be in theaters by the time you read this. This is the kind of film we should be voting for with our dollar support. So, best choice for most support is the local box office.

Closing Thoughts...



There is a movement from the past that came to be called "Quietism." It had other names too but generally it referred to a kind of spirituality that thought drawing close to God meant withdrawing from the world. It tended to become so inwardly focused that to use a terribly overused cliché, it was so heavenly minded it was of no earthly good. To draw near to God never means to withdraw from the call to the world. If you draw near to Him you come to love what He loves and hate what He hates. And you will find a greater longing to embrace the world, your world, with the Love that has embraced you.

Faithing on, Clay & Mary



McLean Ministries

P.O. Box 2088 • Hickory, North Carolina 28603 • 828.322.5402
website: www.mcleanministries.org • email: claymcleanministries@pobox.com