



# 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,



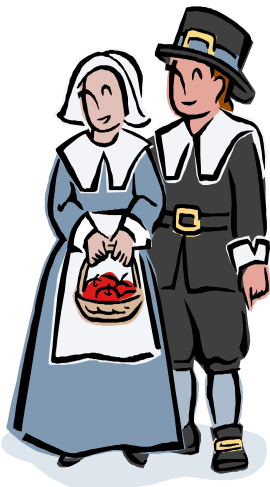
*Beware the leaven of the Pharisees... Luke 12:1*

I took my place on the speaker's podium before a British audience who had come to a weekend healing conference Mary and I were leading. At the back corner was a young man with purple hair, wearing a gothic body suit. He was knitting. I kept him in my line of sight and tried not to make my concern too obvious. After all, God cannot bless purple hair and gothic dress! This guy must be up to no good! And knitting needles can be used as weapons! Any airport guard who has dealt with a little old lady knows that! I would love to call my concern a form of discernment. But it turned out to be nothing more than self righteous insecure prejudice on my part.

The purple-haired knitter introduced himself to me and explained that the knitting needles helped him focus his otherwise nervous energy, but

he was listening. He then recited back to me aspects of our message which proved that not only had he been listening, but he had a lot he could teach me. He was intelligent and theologically astute. But far more, he was kind, caring, and had the fragrance of Jesus all about him. This shepherd of the underground church in London has become very dear to us. I always use this story to illustrate one of (I repeat: one of) my most shameful displays of small-minded self-righteousness.

We are all capable of (and guilty of) prejudice. The word means to judge before we have all the facts. Jesus called this evil practice leaven. The word *leaven* implies that which is invisible, silent, and eventually defining. When we have a pharisaical spirit, it is usually not apparent to



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those around us, at least at first. We just silently size people up, and then treat the person accordingly. But eventually this can become our first response with everyone. Soon it is no longer silent and invisible. It has become who we are.

Nowhere is this evil demonstrated more than on the internet. Just graze a few websites and scan the comments. It doesn't matter if it is theological or political. The snide, degrading, and even at times, murderous diatribes are common. And these responses are a strong reminder. A Pharisee no longer sees persons, but reduces them to objects of scorn. From the crow's nest provided by the internet, we all can hurl fiery darts of truth (truth?) at our enemies from a safe distance. What exactly have we accomplished then? We have not communicated. We have not loved. No one's mind or heart has been changed. We have not touched another soul with our soul. But for a moment we feel better. Better? (Thankfully there are great examples of the opposite on the internet, but you get the point here.)

I had one of those unusual days this week when similar sorts of struggles came my way from several different parts of the country. They all shared this one thing in common: they were people in conflict with strong critical religious opposition to their work. They were loving, giving, godly people being attacked by the self-appointed guardians of truth. In other words, by the Pharisees. Pharisees are not interested in people. They are only interested in their territory. They will shut down and try to push out anyone who transgresses upon their controlled space, whether it is a church, school, ministry or political movement. They believe they are guardians of the truth. But without love, their truth is suspect.

After three conversations with such injured people, I laid down the phone and in my chest was forming a blast of rage against their pharisaical attackers. And at the same time, it dawned on me that I was becoming the thing I was hating. This is not new. What I am writing here is not revelatory or revolutionary. You have all been around a long time and understand this dynamic clearly. That's the point. I have too. And yet, here I was again, being tricked into wasting time and energy. I'm better now. I was able to repent, laugh at it, and turn from it. And as I often do, I turned it all into a newsletter for you to have to wrestle with. :)

There is a time for righteous anger, for godly rage against falsehood. But few of us can wield it well. Let's practice a lot more the fruit of self control and love, especially love of enemies, before we try to wield the lightening bolts of divine wrath at evil. As I saw on a bumper sticker that made my eyes a bit moist, "Be kind. Everyone is fighting a hard battle." Everyone. Even enemies.

*Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.*

*Romans 12:21*



## WAR ROOM...watch it again!

I long for the day when Christian film makers tell stories that aim at the heart, and do not just talk to Christians about Christian themes, and we are getting a bit better. But WAR ROOM is aimed at Christians and is a great instructing tool and motivating story for all of us who are battling for others in prayer. If you haven't seen it, please take time to do so. If you have, see it again. Then, DO what it says.



## THANKSGIVING

So much of what we celebrate should be a part of our every day lives. We give at Christmas. But we should always give. Easter is the RESURRECTION. But every day is a demonstration of LIFE from the grave. And of course, Thanksgiving is the time we give thanks. If we are honest, many of us don't make any special focus of giving thanks. We EAT. We then watch ball games. And then we EAT, again! And maybe at a prayer offered somewhere in all that, we say 'Thank you for this food.' Maybe you could ask your loved ones to say out loud some one thing they are most thankful to God for this season. I want to eat too. But I am far more hungry for being together with my family around the Presence of the Lord than I am for dinner.



## Closing Thoughts...



Giving thanks is not only good manners, it is not only healthy psychology, it is a great weapon of warfare against the dark spirits of this present age. Everything in our culture screams for more and is never satisfied. To be grateful cannot help but cause us to also become happy. It is such a childlike small thing, which is why we so often fail to see that to say THANK YOU out loud can transform the atmosphere around and within us. Saying thanks to God is a rebuke of the spirit of the age that is avarice, lust, greed, and envy. It is the great destroyer of materialism and the desire for stuff. It raises our awareness off the visible and onto the invisible. It's just the way we should live every day. But once a year it's a good time to make it an even bigger deal.

*Giving Thanks,  
Clay & Mary*



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