



# 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,



*...Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. The good man out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil man out of his evil treasure brings forth evil. I tell you, on the day of judgment men will render account for every careless word they utter; for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.*

*Matthew 12:34-37*



I had a college history professor who had the irritating habit of beginning his lectures by saying, "Silence is golden. Let's get rich." Then he proceeded to ruin the golden silence by speaking. He made 45 minutes, three hours long. The recital of meaningless 'facts' which he had repeated like an automaton for his entire career, bored into oblivion any interest in history for scores of students. I look back on his

class with a bit of a chill, because I am now about three decades older than he was when I sat in his class. And I live everyday putting many words together. I have so many hours of words recorded out there – not only in *Nightlight*, but also in nearly 70 teachings ranging from 3-hour sets to 18-hour sets – mostly all my words. Am I really capable of judging the effect of his use of the language? I sit here in my study surrounded by books, and am very aware that all my foibles, inaccuracies, and immature over reactions are still out there. **When words are many, transgression is not lacking... Proverbs 10:19.** Solomon said, **Of making many books there is no end, and much study is a weariness of the flesh. Ecclesiastes 12:12.** I get that. The making of many combinations of words on many subjects in many formats there seems no end. We are awash in far too many words, from far too many sources. The more words we access, the less we seem to understand and/or communicate with success.

I, along with many other speakers and writers, are aware that our 'word crafting' is a potentially dangerous thing. If we are true disciples of Jesus, we take to heart that words carry great weight. They deeply matter.

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Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit. Proverbs 18:21. We must be wise in how we use words. The mind of the righteous ponders how to answer, but the mouth of the wicked pours out evil things. Proverbs 15:28. Do I study carefully before I answer? I have wrestled with this issue my entire adult life. My closest loved ones have suffered under my lack of discretion. I am, to borrow from Isaiah, a man of unclean lips who grew up among a people of unclean lips. Wisely choosing my words based on godly fear of dishonoring the Lord by misusing them, is a deep concern. Am I helping or hurting when I speak? Or do I just pour out what I think?

Here I am, spinning words in order to wrestle with the danger inherent in spinning words! Remember these Christmas lyrics? *“Good Christians fear, for sinners here, the silent Word is pleading... How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given. So God imparts to human hearts the blessing of His Heaven... Silent Night, holy night.”* Do you ever hunger for a pregnant silence to save you from an empty noise? Thomas Merton described the Desert Fathers who fled the cities to seek the heart of God, as those escaping a sinking ship and swimming for their lives to an island of sanity so as not to be drowned by the ocean of noisy evil that threatened to engulf them. Then from that silence, they became pregnant with the living Word which they were able to give to the chaotic world. They had become against the world in order to save the world. I went shopping a few hours ago. The moments I spent in the cacophony of truly horrible musical meaninglessness, provided a congruent soundtrack to support the drudgery reflected on the faces of other shoppers. Me included. The twisted misuse of the art of what was once music, was like demonic fingernails on a blackboard. I ran to my car to escape one more mindless jingle. How I longed for a full silence to save me from the empty noise! And I began to wonder on my way home how much my own ‘wordy’ world may sound to heaven like my store visit sounded to me?

How much do we say that is actually hurtful? Not only not helpful, not only meaningless, but actually damaging? What powers are in our words? What force is released in and by them? So here I am, once again working through my own battle over my misuse of the divine gift of articulate speech. What can I do to settle this conflict within me? I periodically spew out hurtful and/or useless words that infect the atmosphere around me. It cannot be merely cosmetically corrected. I mean, I cannot just ‘not talk,’ as if refusing to pull the trigger empties the destructive potential in the gun. I must have an *inner* change. The core mechanism must be redesigned. *Out of the abundance of my heart, my mouth speaks and my hand writes.* What is in me in abundance? I cannot be my own source. I need Another to come into me and do what I simply cannot do by will power. *I must encounter Him enough to become transformed by closeness with Him.* I can actually avoid such encounter with Him by talking and writing *about* Him!

St. Thomas Aquinas is called the Father of Western Civilization and the great Doctor of the Church. His life work, the **Summa Theologica**, was never completed. When his closest friend and student finally approached him to ask why he was not writing, Thomas replied, “Reginal, I cannot. All that I have written seems like straw to me.” What had happened? During the December Feast of St. Nicholas in 1273 while Thomas was at the altar offering Mass, something happened. He was encountered by the Source and Reality of all things. And after that revelation, he never was able to traffic in mere words about it, ever again. He left this world three months later. That is why his work is not the summation it was intended to become. The headiest and profoundest attempt at grappling with the ultimate issues of being, creation, purpose, meaning, and redemption that would

become the fountainhead of Western philosophy was, in the light of ultimate goodness, straw. *All that I have written is straw.*

Well, I am certainly no Thomas Aquinas! But I certainly do relate to his statement. I look around my study, at my stacks of note books, piles of journals, shelves of research, which at one time so moved, motivated, inspired, even excited me. And I have rare moments, which are becoming more recurring and longer lasting, when it all seems to me to be...straw. For my words to be of any value, they must be spun from straw into gold. That takes a holy supernatural power within me. Not standing apart from me, but uniting with and filling me. I must become incarnated with the Living Word, not merely parroting words, even good words. So for my family, my friends, and for all of you who hear or read my words, I pray earnestly that the straw will be burned away. That only pure gold will remain. And gold is only purified by holy fire. I am crying out for that fire like I have never done before. When you happen to pray for me, pray for the straw to be burned away, and the pure gold to be left. **And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into His likeness from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit. 2 Corinthians 3:18.**

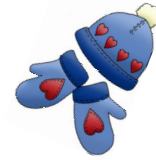


*True language has to do with communion, establishing a relationship that makes for life: love and faith and hope, forgiveness and salvation and justice. True language requires both a tongue and an ear.*

*Eugene H. Peterson (from The Pastor)*



## Closing Thoughts...



We are always so amazed and honored by the responses we receive from many of you. We are continuously in prayer to bring you His Word through us as clear as possible. None of us need to hear or read words that only come from the human mind. We all need His incarnation, His anointing, to make words come alive and successfully impart truth and life and freedom. And we so much appreciate your words to us! And also your kind support and prayers on our behalf. You, as Night-lighters, are spiritual family to us. And we could not do what we do without your help. Thank you!

*In His Joy, Clay & Mary*



*Happy  
Valentine's  
Day*



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