



# 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,



*...the Lord was not in the wind...  
the Lord was not in the earthquake...  
the Lord was not in the fire.*

*And after the fire  
came a still small voice, a gentle whisper...*

*1 Kings 19:11-13*

*Be still, and know that I am God...*

*Psalms 46:10*




Some folks may ask why we would focus on subjects like silence or now, solitude. They may say that these disciplines are not spelled out in Scripture as specific practices. But if you dig just a little, you can find Scriptural elements supporting these and other, what we might term, secondary elements of spiritual practice. That brings us to an issue we need to focus on for a moment. The secondary elements of spiritual practice, such as silence and solitude, don't have specific bible verses prescribing how we should observe them. At least, not like we find with others, such as fasting, prayer, and scripture reading. But as slaves of modernity, we have to be trained to enter into a spiritual journey by some degree of preparation. No, there is no bible verse telling us to practice silence or solitude, so to speak. Our spiritual forebearers didn't have to be trained in that way. They were prepared already by the world they lived in. But we as moderns do have to be prepared to enter various spiritual exercises. So it is helpful to us (even though it may seem obvious) to begin our adventures with something as seemingly simplistic as silence, which can then lead to solitude. These two introductory practices can help prepare us to really engage more specifically.

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Yet if we say to ourselves, “Well, isn’t that obvious? I’ll just be quiet for a while. I’ll get away from people for a bit and get focused. Surely that will set me up for quiet time with the Lord.” Yeah, I thought that, too! I did get a bit quiet, and that led to becoming aware of a hunger for solitude. So at times I would get away from people, phones, and the noise of the news etc. But I found I was only able to do so for an hour! Then all my fleshly addictions came fully awake. I was not prepared for the conflict that would immediately ensue. I was eighteen and had no examples given to me except those I had read about which whetted my appetite for more. But actually DOING IT was like reading about weight lifting but finding myself totally unprepared for the actual pain of direct engagement. I had to work up to it. An hour soon became a morning which then became an entire afternoon that then led to two or more days and nights away. But I didn’t plan it that way. I found myself craving more of Him as I pressed in to His Presence more and more. The more I denied myself of noise and interaction with people, the more I craved silence and freedom. Notwithstanding the fact that I remained at war with all kinds of stimuli pulling at me to give it up!

Let me interject here that self denial needs to be understood rightly. Silence is not denial of sound. It is embracing the realm of quiet, which provides inner space to hear God and your own heart. Solitude is not depriving yourself of company, it is embracing the gift of focused intent with the Lord devoid of interruption. We all have various degrees of weakness when preparing to enter in to solitude. Some of us have made a habit of using our phones to fill idle time. Some of us use sound, such as music going or the TV on constantly, even when we’re not engaged with them. It becomes a false filler of the void of aloneness for some. And even some of us use interactions with other people to keep us distracted. We all know that our daily comforts of noise and conversation have the potential to draw us away from solitude with the Lord. Yet at the same time, we long for the stillness that can lead to eventual intimate and powerful encounters. This means not only encounters with the Lord, but because of our time with Him, encountering our own true inner self stripped of the distractions that cover up His Voice of love and instruction to us.

I hope you are seeing how silence and solitude are directly related. Silence will eventually lead to solitude, which will eventually lead to the place of inner reality. And there in that inner place, we begin to engage with our true selves. We begin to realize that the Lord has always been present and intimately connected to us. We just didn’t know it before! It is we who are taking the necessary steps to shut down the constant moment-by-moment jibber jabber of daily activity that shuts out His voice. It is in the place of solitude where we will encounter God. This is where we hear the still small Voice. This is where communion with God becomes our home away from home. This is where we find rest for our souls, strength for our days, and transcendent hope for our tomorrows. 

## Hurricane Helene Help

It is no exaggeration to say that our neighboring mountain areas have been devastated by one of the worst natural disasters of its kind in our history. The stats are printed all over the news sources. Mary and I along with our children and grandchildren are safe. Many near us and formerly related to us have suffered great earthly loss. The total number of dead is not fully known yet as recovery goes on daily. But what is not so widely reported are the dramatic examples of self-sacrificing heroism, as people not only from here, but from all over the country (from as far away as Oregon, Washington state, New York, and Texas, to name a few) lay down their lives to provide every kind of help you can imagine (water, food, toiletries, clothing, shelter, tree removal, mud and more mud clean-up, road rebuilding, finances, etc.) It will not just take a few months. It will, in many cases, take years.

And if you fear that this disaster has hindered voting, rest your mind. Many rescuers were greeted at some point during their initial encounter with the words, "Where do we go to vote? Help us be sure to get there as soon as we can." People of the mountains understand the battle on many levels and are meeting it even while they lack basic necessities, some lacking even a house at all. In the face of seeming utter destruction they give glory to God for His sustaining goodness, and in the face of seeming sudden death, give Him glory for His sustaining resurrection power to come, all while covered in the mud that was once their earthly home.

Many of you have asked us the best way to give for this hurricane relief in our North Carolina mountain communities. May we point you to **Samaritan's Purse**, based locally near us in Boone. We know many of the folks associated with this non-profit Christian organization, and trust them to distribute funds wisely as led by the Lord.



# Closing Thoughts...



For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come. (Hebrews 13:14)

....we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken... (Hebrews 12:28)

...our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, Who, by the power that enables Him to bring everything under His control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like His glorious body. (Philippians 3:20-21)

*Amen! Come, Lord Jesus.  
In Him, Clay & Mary*



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