

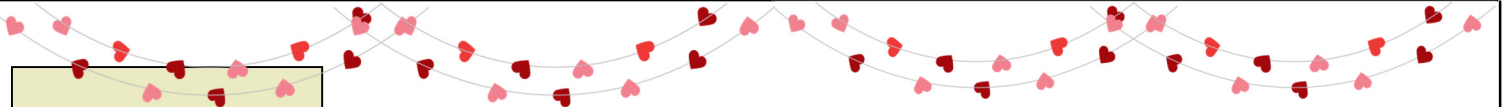


NightLight

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,



*...we will give ourselves continually to prayer...
(Acts 6:4)*

There is so much happening, and it is happening very fast. How do we keep up? The truth is, we cannot. A continuing stance of abiding in the presence of the Lord is what matters. Only He can narrow our focus to give attention to those things on His agenda for us. Keeping our eyes on Him day by day, we grow in the grace of constant prayer.



These are the kind of days when morning prayer is the necessity for the unfolding day, every day. It is a bad habit to turn to yesterday's prayer time to cover for the unexpected demands of today's events. It is like the principle of gathering manna: you cannot hold it over for tomorrow. Just like we need our daily bread, so also we need our daily praying. Catch-up prayers simply do not work. Sure, we can always attempt to run up from behind and cry out for reversals, but that's not as effective as entering the day already prepared. It is wise to face whatever crisis the day may bring with the Lord. Otherwise, you end up praying panic prayers in the heat of the moment. These are prayers born out of a heart of sudden unforeseen but stalking stress. It is like dragging forgiveness behind you rather than holding it out in front of you, which is only possible with the Lord.

This is a scenario that is usually not common to a contemplative prayerful person. The contemplative person, who *practices His presence daily*, is spiritually aware. This is the believer who is still and quiet on the inside with the Lord. This is the one who is anticipating the day's possible conflicts. This is the follower who will already be engaged with the pulse of the day. The matters of this person's mind and heart will already have been brought into the presence of the Lord. Therefore, this believer is ready before the problems of the day have a chance to set the stage for panic or depression to get the upper hand. Facing the day together with the Blessed Trinity, the contemplative person is ready to overcome fear with faith - to overcome hate with love - to overcome despair with hope - to overcome anxiety with peace. This one is not taken by surprise by

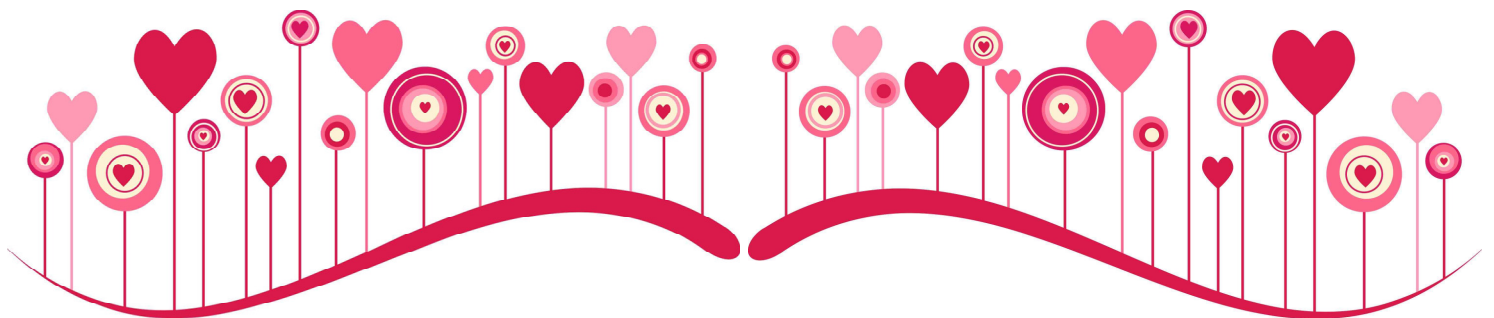
any emotions generated by the issues in the day. This is the follower who by grace and wisdom is living in a posture of preparedness, for whatever may come. The peace of His abiding presence will sustain him. And the wisdom of His orderly way of life will secure him.

This order will be expressed into the outer circumstances from a resource of inner order that has been present within all along, and is called upon when needed. No reactionary self-protectiveness is possible. The person who lives in this way will not feel the need to call into action some special divine intervention, for he puts his trust in the Lord daily. This way of living takes patient practice, which produces such clarity of mind and heart. The absence of this clarity is the signal that we have fallen behind in living a life of peace, patience, and practiced focus in abiding prayer. Living in His presence is to be a daily part of life for us as followers of Jesus Christ. Day in and day out. All the time. We have to practice His presence because we tend to forget **He is ALWAYS with us**. We may lose the *sense* of His presence, but NEVER His actual Presence. He is with us in all situations.

Please do not misunderstand me. I am *not* saying that there is no place for emergency prayers. Of course there is! At some time, life takes every one of us by surprise, so that all we can do is cry out to Him. The Psalms are filled with examples of suddenly crying out for God's help in an unforeseen emerging crisis. But we cannot allow ourselves to become empty, living off the dregs of our past experiences. We need to embrace the humility that none of us has arrived, so to speak, and no longer need to pray. We all need to bathe every day in prayer, and embrace His grace afresh for each new day.

You are being trained by life's experiences to live in His Presence moment by moment. Times of early morning quiet with ears and heart focused on Him trains our hearing to be focused on Him alone. Long periods of ever increasing outer stress is never an excuse to 'take a time of relief from your Father,' as if He is the cause of that stress. He is the **relief** from it! Time away from Him only opens the way for the real stress source to flood in more!

Please STOP, and consider where you are. Ask Him to reset your focus with His agenda, in His Presence. You will be amazed at how quickly the fog clears! And your inner world will be restored to the order His constant Presence sets. Are you judging the abiding presence of God by how you *feel* about it? Know by faith He is with you; do not rely on your feelings! He is with you! He is all good. God is love. Let these truths become a part of you as you renew your daily praying. You are not alone. After all, prayers are conversations with Him. That means talking together. Make it an every day practice. And when you fail, know His grace is new every morning! So...keep at it! Keep on praying...keep on praying...keep on praying...



Happy Valentine's Day!

David's Life Lessons

David's life lessons become our textbook in our own journey through our own life experiences. Have you ever read any of the Psalms where David's attitude is not comforting? This is because David is not speaking from a full revelation of the Lord, but from the rage of a bronze-age king wanting blood (instead of the covering of the Lamb of God, blood shed by Him for us). Any spirit of revenge or violence is the total opposite of the spirit of forgiveness and peace brought by, and bought by, Jesus. David had to learn to yield to the Spirit of grace. He did not know it automatically. He had to learn it. More than once. Never make the mistake of embracing one of David's misguided eruptions of rage and vengeance as a scriptural text allowing you to vent your anger. Jesus is the King of all kings who sets a much higher standard for us, for His Spirit lives in us.

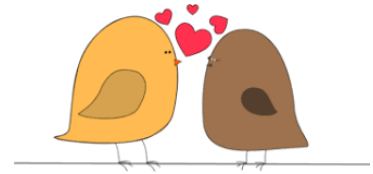
David says, "Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee? and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee? I hate them with perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies." (Psalm 139:21,22)

But Jesus said, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you." (Matthew 5:44)

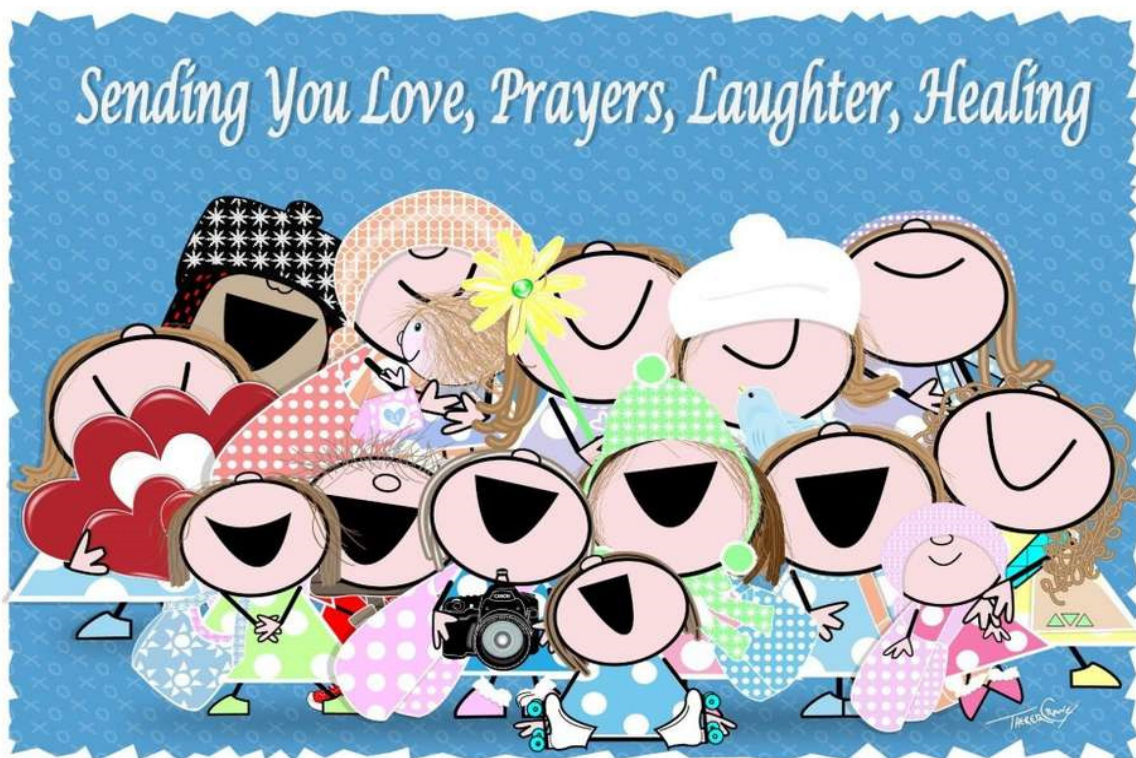
Yet what does David immediately speak after his words above? "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." (Psalm 139:23,24)

This is the life lesson we take from David. He was a man after God's own heart. More than anything, his heart was set on following the Lord. What comfort we can take from this! Even when we get it wrong – and we will – God looks at our heart motive.

Closing Thoughts...



We all struggle with how to correctly discern the directions of how to deal with life's conflicts. Hate your enemies who hate you? That's easy. But we simply give back the same as what we receive from them. The huge difference is Who now lives in us. From another Source, His Spirit living in us, we can choose to manifest an entirely different way, far superior to the old human response. We can ask Jesus to teach us to listen to Him and respond from His Presence to our enemy in the opposite spirit. This changes the human dynamics, leading to a totally different outcome. We become carriers of peace instead of mere human victims/victimizers. We become builders of the Kingdom, over and over, as we choose this better way.



In His Name, Clay & Mary

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