



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,



Count it all joy when you fall into diverse testings and temptations, knowing that the trying of your faith exercises patience. But let patience have her perfect work so that you might be perfect and entire, lacking nothing.

James 1:2-4

[Reissue of article written by Clay in 2002]

It shames me when I think of the suffering church around the world. I sit in comfort writing to you of our need to learn to endure patiently our various trials. I want to say, "What trials?" I want to rebuke myself and us all for calling whatever we may be facing a "trial" of any kind.

Yet, there are trials in every life. The Bible seems to take that for granted. When a suffering Cuban Christian reads James's words, they speak to him. When you or I read them, they speak to us. We are not suffering like our Cuban brother is, but the Spirit Who penned the words of James seems to call all of us, no matter what state we find ourselves in, to a place of yielding patiently to the molding Hand of God. We are to trust that He is

setting forces in motion which work on our behalf in spite of those forces God has not set in motion - all that is evil. By Grace then, the pressures of life are even being turned for our good. His aim is to bring us to a place of maturity of faith through such pressures. What is maturity of faith? It is when we come to rely on Him.

It is understandable that we who have so much and face so little in the way of persecution should approach the question of our own suffering with shame-faced caution. Yet it is erroneous at best to think that because we are not in terrible life-threatening struggles, that we are not therefore in trial. We are still facing battles which ultimately end in either life or death - spiritually speaking. We err if we compare ourselves to others' suffering, especially if it means that we then can refuse to wisely consider our own, whatever form it may take.

Is it right to admit one is mad at God? I have on my shelf an old little book written by David Wilkerson many years ago called *I'm Not Mad at God*. I remember so well the first time I saw the title. In my boyish ignorance I thought, "Well



of course you are not! How foolish to even consider it!” Then I lived a few more years and encountered sufferings, my own as well as that of many others. I found that my own brought me pain, questions, and ultimately welcomed change. It was the sufferings of others that seemed to shake my boyish faith in a god one should never be mad at. I found I was more and more often, mad at God.

At times, I spoke to those who I considered had faced the worst. I wanted to know if they were mad, too. I only found anger in those who’s maturity level seemed equal to mine, who’s worldview seemed as simplistic as my own. But in others I found no anger. Questions, yes. But no raging questions. I found at the bottom of their souls two vital ingredients which seemed to make anger at God not an option for them. 1: A deep awareness of their true state of sinfulness and the sinfulness of all humanity. And 2: A corresponding awareness of the amazing intervention of God which Christ manifested in His Incarnation and Suffering. This understanding of reality resulted in a quiet resolve so that in the face of the most severe and intense trials, they were kept in serenity, and even in joy.

I want to examine these two ingredients of the patient soul. First, I want to answer the question, “Is it right to admit one is mad at God?” Of course it is! It would be wrong to NOT admit it. Yet understand that saying yes to that question is not the same as saying, “Yes, it is right to BE angry at God.” That is a different matter.

I often encounter folks who ARE angry at God for all sorts of what they think of as “reasons.” I do not sit in judgment of them or try to “preach” them out of their anger. I tell them that they are right when they say, “I think God is big enough to handle my being honest with Him about how I really feel.” Certainly He is! And I will even go so far as to say that not only is He big enough to handle it, He may even welcome it, especially if it is the first sign of some real honesty from one who has been too religious to tell the truth about his anger. Some such releases of anger may even have therapeutic benefits. That is certainly true if honesty is replacing religiosity. But in our therapy focused mindset which seeks personal freedom from pain at nearly all costs, is it really enough to just ‘get it off our chest at God?’ No, it is not enough. And we can learn from those who have suffered greatly, how to find peace and trust when we still have not found all our longed for “answers.” Let us now examine the two ingredients of patience I mentioned earlier.

1. Awareness of Their Sinful Condition

If your reaction to this phrase is one of angry frustration, if you think all I am going to say is, “They learned they were sinners who dared not talk back to God,” you would be right in your frustration, but wrong in your assumptions of my meaning. When these suffering saints spoke of their own sinfulness, it was not with a ‘mia culpa’ sense of self-debasement. It was far more with a sense of self-knowing, which can only come by the gift of God’s grace. It is a supernaturally granted revelation of the sinful nature of not only their own souls but that of the whole human race. Such individuals have been so shaken by what they saw that it might be safe to say that nothing else in all of life, no matter how difficult, could surpass the shock of having seen their true self in its godless state.

An elderly German woman who’s entire family had been murdered by the Nazis spoke to me of her pity for the Nazis. She saw in my young face all the rage of uninformed self-righteous indignation. I could not grasp how she did not hate the Nazis! Her wise reply to my complaints against her gracious heart was, “I have seen the holiness of God. No anger of mine could add to it. When I consider that God is holy and just, all I can do is pity them!” She went on to speak of her own sinfulness apart from the grace of God in hopes of helping me see. But I was too young, idealistic, and self-righteous to even come near her meaning at that time. I have now lived enough to see that apart from God’s intervention, I could have been a terrible evil set loose in the world. Though I still am very capable of self-righteous diatribes at times, I know far better now what she was trying to tell me.

Those who know their true condition before God are aware of the evil in themselves and the world. This is a knowing that can only come by grace. They know what they are apart from Him. They do not rail out when evil of any sort attacks them or those they love. This knowledge gives a portion of the whole revelation that produces godly patience.

2. Deep Gratitude For the Cross

To whom is forgiven much they love much (Luke 7:47) Words can get so stale, so overused, so impotent. See if your own heart at this very moment is not tempted to object to this and say that there is nothing new in such a statement. “Yes, Jesus died to save us. Yes, yes, yes. But I need some deeper answers than...” Oh, I know we may never say such a thing as I have just written here. But we will think it, and we will surely think it if the pain becomes great enough in life and answers don’t seem forthcoming. But for the soul that has seen deeply into the human condition (mainly by seeing it in himself), the drama of hopelessness, and then seen even more deeply into the greater drama of Christ, Christ who is God, Christ Incarnated, Christ Suffering, such a soul cannot find room in its worshipping heart to ‘get mad at God’. The idea again seems ludicrous. But NOT ludicrous because it doesn’t understand the depth of evil and the price needed to be paid, as I thought when I was a young religious idealist. But ludicrous because it HAS seen, it DOES know, and there remains nothing in the heart but the deepest gratitude imaginable to such a God for such a grace to overcome such an evil. There is no thought of anything but joy, that even in the face of THIS, whatever this may be, thank you God that you did not leave me to face this alone. You came to rescue me. Thank you, Jesus. Thank you.

I am not there yet. But I know it is so. I have seen it by grace, and I am invited into its deepest riches. I have answered the invitation with a shout of YES LORD, I WANT TO LIVE IN THE GRACE OF GODLY PATIENCE! Just let Him know you are willing to go there. He will draw you there by the same grace that brought you thus far.



Update on Clay

As many of you know, Clay had been steadily, although slowly, improving after 4 kidney surgeries between March and July. But that all changed beginning Friday, September 12th, when Clay had the first of 3 falls. The others followed closely - the 2nd on Monday the 15th, and the 3rd on Tuesday the 16th. He stayed in bed all day Wednesday. I knew something was wrong. I called EMS Thursday morning September 18th, and Clay has been in the hospital ever since (at this writing September 27th) diagnosed with an acute stroke. Since that time, he has developed multiple additional complications that have left him extremely weak. We are both exhausted but utterly peaceful. As for now, we LIVE in the grace of one day at a time.



Closing Thoughts...



Clay and I both have complete confidence that we are in His Loving Hands. Though the enemy may be trying hard to bring Clay down, he will ultimately fail. Whether Clay lives or dies, God's will WILL be done. And that is what we want:

His will - not ours.

For the glory of God, Clay & Mary



Photo taken by our daughter, Holly, on August 9, 2025

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