



NightLight

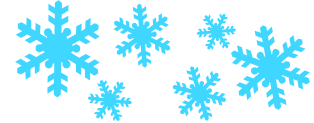
A NEWSLETTER OF McLEAN MINISTRIES

"take heed....as to a light that shines in a dark place." II Peter 1:19

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Dear Friends,



Forgetting those things which are behind....(Philippians 3:13)

Can we ever really forget? Even the often quoted, "God throws our sins into the sea of forgetfulness" is not what it says. What it says is BY FAR better than that!

Who is a God like you, who pardons sin and forgives transgression... You do not stay angry forever but delight to show mercy... You will trample our sins under your feet and hurl them into the depths of the sea. (Micah 7:18-19)

It may be permissible to speak of God forgetting, but it is a poetic license rather than Scripture. The several other Scriptures which promise God will remember our sins no more, mean God will not give them any place in His heart towards us. It doesn't speak of some divine lobotomy. Better than forgetting, He cleanses, heals, forgives, restores, and treats the past as of no more value than what is trampled underfoot or dumped overboard.

When Paul says that he is forgetting what is behind, the word in Greek is close to the idea of *neglect*. He gave no great thought to what was behind.

He doesn't waste any time or energy on it. The context of Paul's words suggests he is speaking of his illustrious past as a Pharisee in which he counts it as dung. For me and others, much of our past does not have to be counted *as* dung. It was. Are we also invited to neglect a shameful past? This time of year is naturally given to thinking about what lies ahead and behind. It would be far better if we believers in Jesus culturally understood the Jewish calendar at least enough to grasp the meaning of the Day of Atonement (dealing with the past), and the Feast of Tabernacles (dealing with the future). God created us as creatures of time who need perennial returns: ever the same, yet changing, heading Somewhere ultimate.



Instead, we have culturally managed to turn this golden opportunity to contemplate the ultimate into a big drinking party which helps numb past shame and future fear. Yet the Holy Spirit may still be able to speak to folks of unhealed issues of the past and great eternal issues of the future in their New Year celebration. There's a scene in **FORREST GUMP** that always moves me when I remember it. A prostitute is standing in the New York City crowd as the New Year's ball falls. She says sadly, wistfully, "Don't ya just love New Year's? It's a chance to start over. Everybody gets a second chance."

The wonderful news for the prostitute and for all of us who made a dung hill of our past, is that we are not offered merely a second chance, but Life out from among the dead. I don't want to forget while still in this present battle where I was, what I was, and what Jesus did to save me from myself, the world, and the devil. Why? Because it moves me to worship, gratitude, obedience, and compassion. It engenders in me a careful watchfulness not to condescend to those watching the ball fall and hoping for a second chance. Mine was not a *I was a mess and I got saved and now I'm good* story. No. I was saved and I was a mess, and Jesus saved me from my mess after I was saved. That means for those of us who thought we got saved and now life seems to be that same mess others claim to have been saved from, there is GREAT HOPE. All we have to do is turn to Jesus. Yes, AGAIN! I did, again, and again, and again. There is a great reason to

neglect giving any energy to your past in the way of self hated, self condemnation, and self punishing guilt, on and on. It is a worthless misuse of energy. **"This one thing I do: forgetting (neglecting) the past, I press on toward the prize of the high calling in Christ Jesus. My determined purpose is that I might KNOW HIM."** (see Philippians 3:7-14).

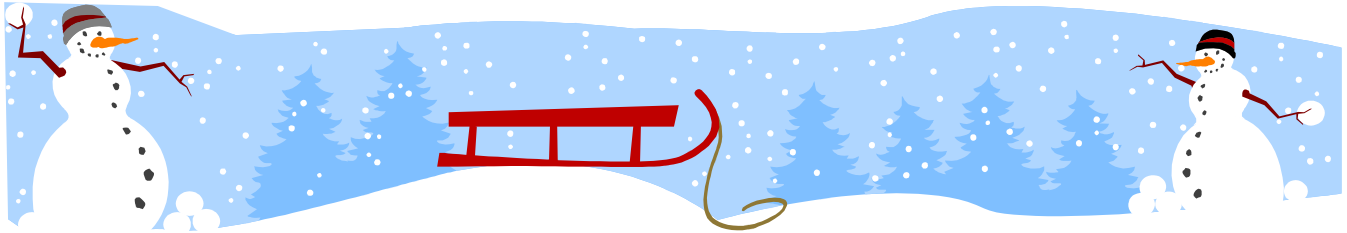
I spent a lot of my young adult life grieving my early years, my sin, my mistreatment of others, and my duplicitous secret life. I'm not sure when it happened, but ever so slowly as I just lived on day by day with Jesus, I took a major turn. A permanent one. I began to think of the past only in the light of Redemption, only in the light of Christ's pursuit of and salvaging of me. It turned my grieving into worship. I cannot think now of the past without it bringing me to tears. Not tears of shame or grief, but tears of deep gratitude.

I make no New Year's resolutions. I don't need them. I made the only resolution needed for the rest of my entire journey: This ONE THING I do. Forgetting what lies behind, today my eyes are on Him. To know Him. To be loved by Him. To become in Him. He holds all my yesterdays and tomorrows. It is today that is mine to live, in the NOW.





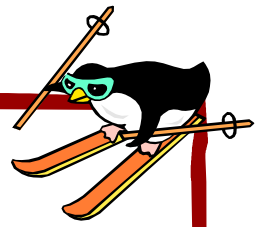
Happy New Year!



One Day at a Time

DM Panton

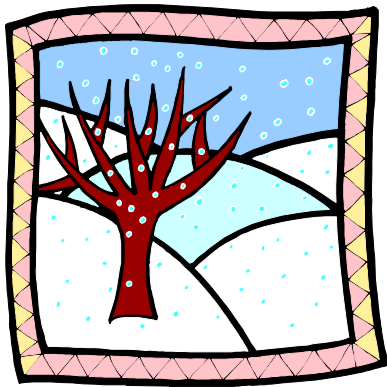
Today is a slender bridge which will bear its own load, but it will collapse if we add tomorrow's. In every year there are 365 letters from the King, each with its own message: "Bear this for me." What shall we do with the letters? Open them a day at a time. Yesterday's seal is broken; lay that letter reverently away; yesterday's cross is laid down, never to be borne again. Tomorrow's letter lies on the table; do not break the seal. For when tomorrow becomes today, there will stand beside us an unseen figure; and His hand will be on our brow, and His gaze will be in our eyes as He says with a loving smile, "As thy days, so shall thy strength be." The golden summary of our life is to be this: as to the past, a record of gratitude; as to the present, a record of service; and as to the future, a record of trust.



Closing Thoughts...

As Christians, we are to think about and treat time differently. We inform time by the power of the Eternal Spirit that lives in us. We don't kill time. We don't waste time. Time is not our enemy. Time is a gift. The present moment is the only time we have in our hands. It is NOW in which we live. We fill time with purpose, even if it is only to sit and watch a sunset and give thanks for another day. Be always awake, looking for His appearing, while at the same time occupying here, creatively, lovingly, productively. *LORD, teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom. (Psalm 90:12)*

*Blessed New Year,
Clay & Mary*



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