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A PERSONAL WORD FOR YOU from Mack McCarter

“The *Breakthrough* To Making A Difference”

“How can I make a difference?” is the fundamental question that can both ignite as well as guide our lives during our journey through “this vale of soul making” as Keats called it. And in our last issue of *Renewal News*, we saw that the *beginning* in making a difference for a better world lay in the *conscious alignment* of our lives with an idea or cause which is bigger than we are but which has become deeply personal within us.

But now we must go further. If we hope to make a difference in our world for the better, we must take another step. ***Each person must be willing to be used in the daily commitment necessary to make real what is the ideal.*** Harry Emerson Fosdick, the great preacher who was a prince of the pulpit for almost six decades of the last century, closed his wonderful autobiography, *The Living of These Days*, with a last chapter entitled, “*Great Ideas That Have Used Me.*” What a clue to meaningful living!

I can offer no greater key to finding significance for your soul than this injunction: let great ideas use you! That is really the pathway to making a difference both in the world and in your own life. And there is no greater sadness that can envelope the human spirit than to know that what we have done over a lifetime is not to “look up and hook up.” But rather we have squandered a precious stewardship. We have sold our god-given birthright of a meaningful life, and like Esau, traded it in for a mess of steaming sewage served in gilded cookware. There is more to life than making money!!! We are charged with making a difference!! And we are unfulfilled until we become willing to be yoked to some great cause that activates all of our energies.

But once we have said, “Yes, I am ready! I am willing!” What is our next step? This is the critical question, because it means that we must do more than activate our emotions. So much of today’s understanding of true *commitment* is simply a surface stirring of the emotions without the deep dedication of the will. The bumper sticker which read “Tithe if you love God! Anybody can honk!” is a reflection of this difference between our modern flash of excitement and the steady burn of a heart which once aflame can accomplish great things for God while expecting great things from God. So what do we do to take this fire and put it to use in such a way as to lift the tide of life in new ways?

The answer to this question lies in what at first blush appears to be a strange territory to we moderns. Yet here is the answer which the ancients grasped in ways

far more full than we ourselves: ***We must become meek!*** What an astonishing assertion this is! But I beg you to explore the rich depth of this great truth.

To the old sages, meekness did not mean becoming like a human dew drop, so fragile and so ill-fitted to sustain unkindly shocks. Meekness was not a whimpering, cowering neurotic engorged with passive aggressive tendencies. If that were so, then how do we explain the extraordinary portrait of Moses given in the *Torah*? Here he is, winning favor in Pharaoh's court, then exploding in anger at the mistreatment of his people. We see him, bare-hands ablaze, in striking and killing an Egyptian overseer for beating a Hebrew slave. Then the desert, the burning bush, the return, the confrontation of the mighty king of Egypt, the freeing of the slaves, the fleeing, the signs and wonders, the meeting with God, the ten commandments, the anger at the idolatry of his people, the wilderness, the magnificent leadership.

But read this commentary in Numbers 12:3. "***Now Moses was very meek, above all men on the face of the earth.***"(KJV) There is something deeper about "meek." Moses was anything but weak and retiring. He was just the opposite. "Forceful" was his middle name! The meaning of "meekness" is found in the correct translation of the greek word, *praos*. It literally means, "strength under harness."

Aristotle, in painting a word picture of "meekness" which was a highly esteemed character trait or virtue to the ancient Greek, pictured a fiery black stallion, muscles quivering in power and taut with strength, yet with it's *power under control or directed by a higher intelligence by accepting the bit and the bridle and submitting to their direction*. Aristotle knew that true power could only be unleashed through true discipline. It is in submitting the emotions, the mind, and the will, to the discipline of training that we become useful in the service of a higher cause.

Great musicians, great athletes, great scholars all pay the price of submission to discipline in order to achieve greatness. It is the seed of drudgery that blossoms into the fruit of ecstatic achievement. So when King David says in Psalm 37:10 & 11:

"A little while, and the wicked will be no more;

"though you look for them, they will not be found.

"But the *meek* will inherit the land and enjoy great peace."

He means that the *trained*, the *disciplined*, those *who place their power under the controlled cause of a higher claim*, will be the true winners in this life. It is simple. A trained army will beat an untrained army every single time. The *breakthrough* to making a difference is submission to a process of discipline which will equip each of us to utilize our strengths in the service of greatness. How we do that to change society is the final part in this series. Stay with us for "The *Breakthrough To Making A Difference II*."