

By Jim Langham

A couple of weeks ago I was sitting in an area eatery consuming a sandwich and sipping on a cup of coffee. Suddenly it dawned on me, “the look game,” the waitress glancing my way to see if I was ready for more coffee, or my glance her way when I was desiring some service.

Amazing, isn't it, how a one second glance across a busy restaurant can bring a quick-footed waitress with a fresh pot of coffee just because I gave a certain glance.

And there are other restaurant looks that speak many words. Such as the:

“When is our food coming out” look,

“Oops, I think there's something that's not right with my order” look,

“When are you going to bring the ketchup” look,

“Never mind, we found it” look,

and the always infamous, “Could you bring our check we need to go” look.

It doesn't take long for a new waitress working in a family eatery to realize that there is much more to the job than simply taking orders, serving and giving off a pleasant aura to customers. There is a whole language, “the school of looks,” that must be ascertained to make it seem like

a waitress knows everything about the needs of the customers, even when those who order have an entirely different way of portraying the same language.

Interestingly, all of life has its unspoken language, usually based on the way we glance, but also based on some type of body language.

We are all familiar with the “I didn’t complete my homework look” in the classroom. You know, you didn’t get a chance to study your lesson. When the teacher begins to ask questions, you try to avoid eye contact, hoping that you won’t be called upon to offer the information. Of course, most experienced teachers look at it in just the opposite fashion.

A close friend who taught school said that when he would ask questions, he would always look for the ones who tried to avoid eye contact. Those would be, he would say, the ones who were the most likely to be called upon.

Those who are involved in close relationships quickly learn to ascertain the look in the eye of those that they love. I can remember when the children were home and I came through the door late in the day. Within a second, I could tell by the look in Joyce’s eyes whether or not it had been a good day or a bad day.

I recall one time when I arrived home. I glanced in the eye and I knew that things weren’t well. In fact, I was so confident that it hadn’t been a great day that I said, “You know, let’s start this all over.”

I turned and walked out the door, drove the car around the block, came back in, threw my hat into the living room and said, “Hi, Honey, I’m home!”

Of course, that stroke of humor brought a mixture of laughter and tears and the desired affect of changing the look into one of, “He noticed, he cares, and just did a clumsy job of trying to make me laugh, but it worked!”

Also, there are the traditional happy looks, sad looks, caring looks, looks that place walls and distance and various other kinds of ways of portraying what we are really feeling on the inside.

Jesus spoke on this topic when he said that the eye is the light of the body, by glancing into the eye, we are told the tenure of what might be stirring inside the soul of the other.

Then there are the expressions such as “apple of my eye” and “eye to eye.”

Take this column, for example. I, who desire to be a very caring person, can be pictured glancing at you with concern for how your day is going. I’ve often wondered what the eyes of the readers are reflecting on a certain day when they read a column. Interesting because the looks of my own eyes vary so much when I proof a column; sometimes I have tears at my own writing, if I am portraying a particular need. Other times I give it the “rolled eye look,” wondering how I could have written certain things the way I did. But mostly it is a look of concern, and setting my thoughts on a Gospel song once written by a 16-year-old girl, “Let me see this world, dear, Lord, as though I were looking through your eyes.”